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THE COMMUNIST INTERNATIONAL

1939 No. 5

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The Generation of Communism

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Fifteen Years Since the Murder of Matteotti

Japanese Imperialism Wanted to Catch Fish

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Fifty Years of May Day

BY WILHELM PIECK

WHEN, fifty years ago, July 14, 1889, the occasion of the centenary of the great French Revolution, the International Workingmen's Congress in Paris passed a resolution calling on the workers of all countries to demonstrate on May First each year in favor of the legal eight-hour day, this resolution—which for the first time in history provided the possibility of unified international action by the workers—was most warmly welcomed throughout the world.

The proletariat enthusiastically concurred with the proposal. The bourgeoisie was filled with fear and horror. Remembrance of the Paris Commune was still so fresh that the bourgeoisie scented the specter of revolution behind this decision. This recognition of proletarian internationalism, of international solidarity, was an expression of the fact that the proletariat had seriously begun to shake the chains by which the bourgeoisie sought to prevent the development of its class power and class organization.

In Germany, the proletariat had, after twelve years of struggle, smashed Bismarck's "exceptional laws," passed in 1878 against the "revolutionary activities of Social-Democracy," and had brought the fall of their author. The German proletariat manifested its power in the growth of the Social-Democratic Party and its parliamentary vote and in the rise of the trade unions and cooperative societies. This upsurge also took place in other countries, particularly in America where it was expressed in powerful strikes. The magnificent slogan, "Workingmen of all countries, unite!" with which Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, in 1848, had ended *The Communist Manifesto*—the first potent document of socialism-communism—appeared to be finding its fulfilment. On the occasion of the first operation of the resolution on May Day demonstrations, Engels wrote as follows in his introduction, dated May 1, 1890, to *The Communist Manifesto:*

"'Workingmen of all countries, unite!' Few were the voices to respond when we launched these words into the world. . . . On September 28, 1864, the proletariat of well nigh every land in Western Europe joined hands in the International Workingmen's Association of glorious memory. The International survived for only nine years. Nevertheless, the union that organization created will live for all time; it is today stronger than ever. Indeed, events are showing this to the full. . . . The spectacle we are now witnessing will make the capitalists and landowners of all lands realize that today the proletarians of all lands are, in very truth, united."

Fifty years after the adoption of the resolution on the May Day demonstrations, the world-shaking significance of the slogan, "Workingmen of all countries, unite!" could find no better or more splendid corroboration than in the historically important event of the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks). Through the report of Comrade Molotov on the Third Five-Year Plan, and particularly through the profound report of Comrade Stalin, the proletarians of the world have been shown how the Bolshe-

viks, by means of the revolutionary unity of the working class and the entire Soviet people have established that power over one-sixth of the earth which is realizing socialism and is beginning to operate the gradual transition of classless society to communism.

When over twenty-one years ago, in November, 1917, the Russian workers and peasants, under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin, carried through the socialist revolution, taking the power of the state into their hands, in order to put an end to war and abolish the century-old enslavement and exploitation of the workers and peasants by the capitalists and landowners, to break the national suppression of the peoples and to realize socialism, there were many doubters who prophesied a swift collapse, owing to the capitalist encirclement of the country.

It was a gigantic task which was assumed by the Russian workers and peasants, a task which had had no equal in the history of humanity. However, under the theoretical, politically consistent and confident leadership of Lenin and Stalin they succeeded by resolute struggle in overcoming one difficulty after the other, in beating one enemy after the other, and in realizing the unity of the peoples and the mighty plans of socialist construction. The doubters therefore were defeated; many of them, in their disbelief in the victorious power of the workers and peasants, became their open or disguised enemies, agents of hostile foreign powers and particularly of fascism. However, they were thoroughly beaten and exterminated.

Thus, fifty years after that resolution on May Day, the Soviet power stands—guarded by its Red Workers' and Peasants' Army and the whole Soviet people, and surrounded by the vigilant affection of the workers of all lands—an unbreakable and impregnable fortress of socialism proving to the proletarians of all countries the victorious power of the united working class and its close alliance with the peasantry, and thus inspiring them to realize the slogan of *The Communist Manifesto* and of socialism throughout the world.

* * *

The May Day demonstration bears, in its origin and nature, a revolutionary character which expresses the irreconcilable contradiction between proletariat and bourgeoisie and is adapted to bringing the class struggle to a higher stage. The conception of such a united demonstration of the proletariat sprang from the great economic struggles between workers and capitalists, particularly in America in the 'eighties, in the course of which the workers were defending themselves against the appalling exploitation by the capitalists. The capitalists sought to prevent the workers from achieving success, by the organization of strikebreaking on a large scale, and proceeded to the most extreme provocation of the workers in order to defeat them with the aid of the armed forces of the state. Out of the experiences of this struggle, the workers developed the recognition of the need of national and international solidarity and the united use of their strength. They realized the decisive importance of the laying-down of tools, of the strike, as a method of struggle for the realization of certain social and economic demands upon the employers and the state.

The fourth congress of trade unions and workers' associations of the United States, which met in Chicago in 1884, first put forth the demand for the eight-hour day, together with certain other demands for the improvement of living conditions of the workers. These demands were determinedly resisted by the capitalists. The workers sought, by the organization of a general strike, to add force to their demands. The strike movement which developed out of the railroadmen's strike of March and April, 1886, soon spread throughout the whole country.

The center of the strike was in Chicago where the striking workers, in conjunction with all workers of the city, held a vast demonstration in the streets on May First, under the slogans of the

congress. The police resorted to extreme provocation on this occasion, and flung a bomb into the crowd of workers which resulted in considerable loss of life and damage. The bourgeoisie placed upon the leaders of the demonstration the responsibility for the bomb attack, and sentenced eight of them to death. Four were hanged. As an answer to this bloodthirsty persecution, the congress in St. Louis in 1888 of the American Federation of Labor resolved to hold a demonstration on May First each year, beginning with 1890, of the whole working class, for the realization of its demands.

The International Socialist Congress in Paris in 1889 based itself on this resolution in the establishment of the international May Day demonstration. Its resolution reads as follows:

"International Demonstration on May 1, 1890.

"The Congress resolves: A great international manifestation should be organized on a definite day and in such a way that the workers should simultaneously, on a day decided, demand to the public authorities in all countries and in all towns for the establishment of the eight-hour day and bring forward the other resolutions of the International Congress.

"In consideration of the fact that such a demonstration has been decided on already by the American Federation of Labor at its Congress held at St. Louis in December, 1888, for May First, it has been decided that this day should be the day of the international demonstration.

"The workers of the different nations should make preparations for the demonstration in the manner which is best suited to the conditions of their country."

The resolution gave no more definite description of the form which the demonstration should assume, but left this matter to the decision of the working class organizations of the various countries. The introductory wording of the resolution, however, providing that the "great international manifestation" should take place, and that on a "specific day" the workers should present their demands for the eight-hour day to the authorities, quite distinctly signified that this manifestation would require abstention from work on that day. Only, the workers themselves in the various countries were to decide this. And the workers in almost all countries so understood the resolution. They remembered the words of the poet, Herwegh:

Man of labor, rise,
Your power recognize!
If your strong arm will,
Every wheel is still.

On May 1, 1890, these words were tested. The first May Day celebration consisted of a powerful demonstration by the proletariat on behalf of its class demands, particularly the eight-hour day. In Great Britain, France, Belgium, Austria-Hungary, Germany, Sweden, Poland, America, Norway, Italy, Spain, Holland, Denmark and other countries, the proletarians marched on May First in mighty demonstrations; in many capital cities, also, the workers quit work.

The bourgeoisie encountered this day with fear and horror. In many countries, it held the military prepared for an attack upon the demonstrating workers. These attacks did in fact take place in a particularly provocative form in Austria-Hungary, where May Day was already a public holiday as the traditional spring festival. In spite of the express prohibition of the demonstration, with the threat to suppress by force every effort to hold one, in Vienna alone over 100,000 workers paraded; which fact Frederick Engels mentions most appreciatively in a letter to Victor Adler. In many places, also, the employers locked out for a considerable time the workers who had demonstrated. This resolute demonstration of the united will to struggle of the proletariat caused the bourgeoisie to offer the strongest opposition to any continuation of May Day demonstrations in the form of abstention from labor. In this, they found most willing support from the reformist leaders of the working class in all countries.

Thus, the international May Day demonstration not only became the subject

of struggle between proletariat and bourgeoisie, but also the subject of struggle between the working class and reformism and opportunism in its own movement. The capitulation of the reformist leaders to the bourgeoisie found distinct expression in their opposition to the international May Day demonstration. While the workers, in their hard struggle against the exploitation of the employing class and on behalf of improved wages and working conditions, held fast to the fighting character of international May Day, and stood firm under the threats of the bourgeoisie, the reformist leaders—at international Socialist congresses and at the national Socialist and trade union congresses of the various countries—exerted every effort to divest May Day of its revolutionary character and transform it into a harmless "May festival."

Such efforts were made particularly by the reformists in Germany. Even before the first May Day demonstration in 1890, the Social-Democratic Reichstag fraction—which usurped the leading role in the party—issued, on April 13, 1890, an open warning to the German workers that they should desist from quitting work on May First because "under the present circumstances it is impossible to procure a general stoppage of work." Apart from this, however, the Reichstag fraction also rejected on general grounds "the general abstention from work for the space of a certain day."

The Reichstag fraction endeavored to base its "warning" to the workers upon the difficult labor conditions which had resulted from the economic crisis; but the party executive, in its subsequent statement of approval of the fraction's declaration, made it apparent that the chief reason was a retreat before the threats of the bourgeoisie who had set on foot large-scale measures for the employment of the armed power of the state against the demonstration. The great election successes which the Social-Democratic Party had obtained on February 20 should have caused the party to go forward boldly in favor of the carrying out of the May Day demonstration, without being fooled by the provocation of the bourgeoisie. However, the German workers did not allow this "warning" of the Reichstag fraction and party executive to prevent them from abstaining from work in a number of localities, for the May Day demonstrations. In Hamburg a long lock-out took place of workers who had quit work to demonstrate.

At the following International Socialist Congress, the reformists employed widely varying methods to frustrate the international May Day demonstration. At the International Socialist Congress in Brussels, in 1891, the German delegation—representing the strongest of the Social-Democratic Parties—proposed that the May Day demonstration be postponed to the first Sunday in May. It is true the congress rejected this thoroughly reformist proposal, but a decision on this matter was left to each particular country. Nevertheless, the resolution did say that May First:

". . . should be a common day of celebration for the workers of all countries on which the workers shall make known the community of their demands and their solidarity. This day shall be a holiday, whenever this is not made impossible through the circumstances in each country."

But in the Second International, in which the worst forms of reformism and opportunism were spreading, there also lacked any trace of international discipline so that the resolutions relating to the individual countries had but very little importance. It is true that the Marxist delegates at the international congresses sought to check the reformist stagnation of the Second International. It is to their efforts, which expressed the spirit of the working masses, that the fact may be ascribed that the May Day demonstrations were not abandoned during the early years at the international congresses.

Arising from these antagonisms, the most contradictory resolutions were passed regarding May Day. Soon the May Day demands went far beyond the

eight-hour day, the demonstrations being also held on behalf of workers' welfare measures in general and also for world peace. The resolution of the International Socialist Congress of 1893 in Zurich said in part:

"The demonstration on May First for the eight-hour day must simultaneously express the powerful will of the working class to action and strengthen the hope in the approach of a social revolution and international peace."

The reformists, while voting in favor of resolutions of this kind, endeavored at the same time to divest the demonstrations entirely of their revolutionary character.

With regards to abstention from work, the Zurich congress decided that it was the duty of Social-Democracy of each country "to strive for the carrying out of abstention from work on May First and to support every effort in any locality or by any organizations in this direction."

However, among those who voted against this formulation were opportunist delegates from Germany, Bulgaria, Denmark, Russia and other countries. The Amsterdam International Socialist Congress in 1904, opposing the postponement of the demonstrations till the first Sunday in May in a number of countries, demanded "most emphatically" of the Social-Democratic Parties and trade unions that they "demonstrate each year on the First of May for the statutory enactment of the eight-hour working day, for the class demands of the proletariat and for world peace." Simultaneously, however, this congress made the obligation of an abstention from work on May First applicable only wherever "it is possible without injury to the interests of the workers."

It was the custom in Germany for the May Day demonstrations to be treated as a special subject on the agenda of the annual congress of the Social-Democratic Party. The reformists—and particularly the reformist trade union leaders—made use of this occasion increasingly to attack the conception of complete abstention from work on May First, so that the demonstration during the day began to lessen and to be replaced by evening meetings. Nevertheless, hundreds of thousands of workers did celebrate May First by refraining from work, and in many cases were therefore dismissed by their employers or locked out for some time.

As in Germany, so in other countries, the reformists opposed the May Day demonstration. In some countries it was held on the first Sunday in May, as in Great Britain; in some, it was restricted to evening meetings; and in others it took the form of some sort of festivity, in the course of which a speech would be delivered on May Day. Obviously, such treatment of May Day by the reformists could only result in international solidarity, both in idea and action, being driven more and more into the background.

* * *

In tsarist Russia, the May Day demonstration was employed somewhat later as a means of struggle of the working class, but, when it was adopted, it became a day of the most powerful mobilization of the masses against tsarism. This was particularly noticeable during the revolutionary movements of 1905 and the great strike movement of 1912. In the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)* the following is said regarding the strike movement of 1905:

"The May Day demonstrations in a number of towns were marked by clashes with police and troops. In Warsaw, the demonstration was fired upon and several hundred persons were killed or wounded. At the call of the Polish Social-Democrats the workers replied to the shooting in Warsaw by a general protest strike. Strikes and demonstrations did not cease throughout the month of May. In that month over 200,000 workers went on strike throughout Russia. General strikes broke out in Baku, Lodz and Ivanovo-Voznesensk. More and more frequently the strikers and demonstrators clashed with the tsarist troops. Such clashes took place in a number of cities

—Odessa, Warsaw, Riga, Lodz and others.

"Particularly acute was the struggle in Lodz, a large Polish industrial center. The workers erected scores of barricades in the streets of Lodz and for three days (June 22-24, 1905), battled in the streets against the tsarist troops. Here armed action merged with a general strike. Lenin regarded these battles as the first armed action of the workers in Russia."*

With regard to the strike movement in 1912, the *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.)* says:

"The May Day strikes in 1912 involved about 400,000 workers. These strikes bore a marked political character and were held under the Bolshevik revolutionary slogans of a democratic republic, an eight-hour day, and the confiscation of the landed estates. These main slogans were designed to unite not only the broad masses of the workers, but also the peasants and soldiers for a revolutionary onslaught on the autocracy."**

In his article, "The Revolutionary Rise," Lenin wrote as follows with regard to the great importance of the 1912 strike movement:

"The huge May Day strike of the proletariat of all Russia and the accompanying street demonstrations, revolutionary proclamations, and revolutionary speeches to gatherings of workers have clearly shown that Russia has entered the phase of a rise in the revolution."

In a leaflet written by Stalin and issued by the Central Committee of the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party on the occasion of May 1, 1912, there appears the following:

"Since the Russian workers began to realize their situation, they did not wish to remain behind their comrades but joined ever more in the general chorus of their foreign comrades, celebrating in common with them May First, in spite of the brutal repression of the tsarist government. It is true that during the last two or three years, in the period of the counter-revolutionary bacchanalia . . . of the depression in industry and the stultifying political indifference among the wide masses, the Russian workers were robbed of the opportunity of celebrating their proud labor festival in the old manner.

"But the activity which has recently begun in the country, the industrial strikes and political protests among the workers . . . the increasing discontent of wide sections of the peasantry occasioned by the famine in over twenty districts, the protests of hundreds of thousands of employees against the 'revived' regime of the Russian landowners—all this shows that the deathly sleep is coming to an end and is giving place to political activity in the country and particularly among the proletariat. Therefore, this year, the Russian workers can and must stretch out their hands to their foreign comrades. Therefore they must celebrate with them the First of May in one form or another."

In his article of June 28, 1913, entitled "The May Day Celebration of the Revolutionary Proletariat," Lenin wrote:

"The May Day celebrations of the working class of Russia—which began with the test in Riga and then led on May First to definite action in St. Petersburg—this May Day celebration came like a lightning flash through the heavy, pale, dejected atmosphere and cleansed the air. To hundreds of old revolutionaries, who had not been tortured to death by the persecution of the hangmen or broken by the apostasy of friends, to millions of the new generation of democrats and Socialists, appeared once more the task of the developing revolution in all its greatness, and the forces of the progressive class which were leading it stood out clearly.

"Already a few weeks before May First the government had literally lost its head, and Messieurs the manufacturers behaved like completely senseless people. Arrests and house searches seemed to turn all the working class quarters of the capital topsy-turvy.

"But the more the gendarmerie exerted itself and 'cleansed' the factory

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* *History of the C.P.S.U.(B.)*, pp. 59-60, International Publishers, New York.

** *Ibid.*, p. 146.

suburbs, the more they arrested right and left the last names upon their 'lists of suspects,' the less did it help. The workers ridiculed the helpless fury of the tsarist bands and the capitalist class. . . . The workers . . . procured, as though sprung from the earth, ever fresh packages of small, poorly produced, short and simple but comprehensible leaflets with appeals to strike and to demonstrate, with reminders of the old . . . revolutionary slogans of the Social-Democracy which in 1905 led the first attack of the masses upon the autocracy and the monarchy. . . . The number of the strikers actually rose to 250,000.

"Even more impressive than the numbers of the strikers on May First, and even more important, were the revolutionary street demonstrations of the workers. With revolutionary songs and open calls to revolution, the workers fought under red banners in all suburbs and at all ends of the capital for several hours against the forces of the police and secret service, which had been mobilized by the government with tenfold energy."

* * *

During the World War, the reformists, who in their own countries supported the war policies of the bourgeoisie, sought to prevent the workers from holding May Day demonstrations on the pretext that there were no reasons for such demonstrations. The leadership of German Social-Democracy, in 1915, "ordered" the working class organizations "to refrain this year from stoppage of work on May First, in view of the special circumstances." The leadership of the French Socialist Party appealed to the French workers on this day to work for the defense of their country. And the Italian reformists even voted that May First should be the occasion of a demonstration in favor of Italy's participation in the World War.

Lenin vigorously opposed these infamous actions of the reformists, and in 1915, in notes for a report, "May First and the War," drew up the results of the first war months. He decisively contested the false claims of the reformists that no grounds existed during the war for May Day demonstrations, and showed how crises in capitalist society and revolutionary situations would be produced by the war. We quote the following extract from these notes:

"The war is a tremendous crisis. Each crisis (with possible temporary stoppages and retreats) means: (a) an acceleration of development; (b) the contradictions coming out into the open; (c) the sharpening of these contradictions; (d) collapse of what is rotten. . . . In every crisis one is broken, the other *steeled*—steeled for the socialist revolution; bankruptcy of what is harmful, rotten in the working class movement; overcoming of the obstacles to revolutionary struggles."

The May Day demonstrations which were carried out by the workers during the war proved to the fullest extent the correctness of Lenin's analysis and prediction. In Russia, on May 1, 1915, there were demonstrations and strikes in a number of towns. The workers demonstrated under the slogans: "Long Live the International!" "Workingmen of All Countries, Unite!" "Down with War!" The Bolshevik organizations distributed leaflets and proclamations calling for the overthrow of tsarism and a revolutionary termination to the war. The May Day demonstrations of 1916 were still more imposing. Great strikes took place in St. Petersburg, Moscow and the Don Basin, those in Moscow embracing the state war factories as well as privately-owned concerns.

The May Day after the February Revolution of 1917, by which tsarism was overthrown, was a vast demonstration of the Russian workers for peace, bread and freedom. Under the leadership of Lenin and Stalin, the Bolsheviks, by means of tenacious mass work, secured the support of the majority of the working class and led them to the socialist October Revolution which not only set up Soviet power but also prepared the conclusion of the international slaughter of the peoples. On one-sixth of the earth's surface the May Day demonstration became a celebration of the victory

of the workers and peasants over their exploiters and oppressors, a demonstration of the international solidarity of the Soviet people with the proletariat of the whole world in the struggle against fascism and reaction.

But the workers in other countries did not allow the reformists to prevent them from holding their May Day demonstrations. There were great strikes in France, Italy, Austria-Hungary, frequently accompanied by clashes between the workers and the police and troops. In Germany, Karl Liebknecht, at a demonstration in Berlin on May 1, 1916, raised his voice against the imperialist war and the policy of class truce of Social-Democracy. Great protest strikes ensued as a result of his arrest and his sentence to four-and-a-half years' imprisonment.

* * *

After the socialist October Revolution and the conclusion of the World War, the military monarchies of Germany and Austria-Hungary broke under the revolutionary attack of the masses. In their place, there arose the bourgeois republics. In these republics, as well as in certain other countries, the reformist leaders obtained a certain definite influence over the governments. But, instead of employing this influence to secure for the workers the full legal right to hold May Day demonstrations, they now sought even more to prevent them. In their hatred of the revolutionary movement, they did not even hesitate to prohibit the workers from holding May Day demonstrations, and even went so far as to send the armed forces against them.

In 1928, armed troops of the Polish Social-Democracy fired upon a Communist May Day demonstration in Warsaw, killing five and wounding hundreds. On May 1, 1929, Zörgiebel, the Social-Democratic Berlin police chief, forbade the workers to demonstrate and then gave orders to fire upon them when they refused to abide by this prohibition. The result of this crime on the part of the Social-Democratic leaders was 33 dead and hundreds injured.

But their fighting experiences inspired the workers ever more to hold mighty demonstrations on May Day against the capitalist regime. The revolutionary conception of the May Day demonstration had become so deeply rooted in the hearts and minds of the masses of the workers that neither the bourgeoisie nor the reformist bureaucracy of the Social-Democratic Party or trade unions could eradicate it. In the post-war period, there were great May Day demonstrations in all countries, as, for instance, in France in 1920, in which the railroadmen also took part and the entire railroad system was held up. In 1926 in Great Britain, the May Day demonstration inaugurated the General Strike in support of the striking miners. But the workers always had to carry out their May Day demonstrations in vigorous struggle with the employing class, the power of the state and the opposition of the reformists.

* * *

The revolutionary character of the May Day demonstrations found its greatest strengthening through the triumph of the socialist revolution in Russia. This victory brought complete confirmation of the Marxist-Leninist teaching that the victory of the proletariat over the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat are both possible and necessary in order to realize socialism, even if only in one country first of all.

The triumph of the socialist revolution did not only strengthen the fighting determination of the toiling masses of the whole world, but also gave a powerful impetus to the uniting of the advance guard of the proletariat in the Communist Parties of the various countries, which found their leading revolutionary strength in the Communist International, founded by Lenin. In the Communist International of Lenin and Stalin, the First International, founded by Marx and Engels, found its revolutionary perpetuation, after the Second International—corroded by reformism and opportunist capitulation—had igno-

miniously collapsed owing to the betrayal of proletarian internationalism in August, 1914. In the Communist International, Lenin and Stalin established the power which restored proletarian internationalism and raised it to a higher stage—all of which found its expression in the struggle for revolutionary May Day demonstrations.

The revolutionary importance of the annual May Day demonstrations has in no way lessened, but is, in fact, increasing as a result of the growing acuteness of the class struggle between the toiling masses and fascism and reaction in all capitalist countries and colonies.

That which again and again impels the workers in the capitalist countries to take part in May Day demonstrations is the sublime conception of the national and international solidarity of the workers, and the will to achieve solidarity; and from this neither the reformist leaders of Social-Democracy, nor the threats and brutality of the capitalists, of the state, or even of fascism, can divert them. The slogans of the May Day demonstrations—the eight-hour day, workers' welfare, world peace—have not lost any of their old significance, but have in fact acquired more.

As before, but in stronger degree, the question at hand is the realization of these demands. Faced by the increased efforts and drastic measures adopted by the employers, and particularly by fascism, to intensify the exploitation of the workers, the struggle for the eight-hour day and workers' welfare demands even greater exertion of all forces of the working class.

The warlike aggression of fascism has rendered the struggle for peace one of the loftiest tasks of the international proletariat. In the ebb and flow of the May Day demonstrations of the last fifty years is reflected the hard struggle of the working class for bread, peace and liberty. In the course of these struggles, the working class has gained the important knowledge that it must be united, must rely upon mutual help, if it is to triumph. Unity and solidarity in the struggle—such is the profound significance of the May Day demonstration; such is the great lesson which the workers gain from their struggles.

In the unity of the working class and its alliance with the peasantry, in the united revolutionary struggle of the workers in the capitalist countries and their alliance with the workers and peasants of the Soviet Union, there lies the absolute guarantee of their victory over all reactionary and fascist forces. It is precisely this point of which the highest example has been given in the socialist revolution of the Russian workers and peasants and in their safeguarding of their victory. Based upon this mighty socialist force, stimulated by the powerful advance of socialism in the Soviet Union, among the toiling masses of the capitalist countries is growing the belief in their power and the will to fight against fascism, against its military aggression, against its Trotskyite agents in the working class movement, against all reaction. It is precisely as Comrade Stalin, leader and teacher of the world proletariat, showed at the conclusion of his report to the Eighteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U. on the successes and achievements in the Soviet Union, in the following words:

"The chief conclusion to be drawn is that the working class of our country, having abolished the exploitation of man by man and firmly established the socialist system, has proved to the world the truth of its cause. That is the chief conclusion, for it strengthens our faith in the power of the working class and in the inevitability of its ultimate victory. . . .

"If the successes of the working class of our country, if its fight and victory serve to rouse the spirit of the working class in the capitalist countries and to strengthen its faith in its own power and in its victory, then our Party may say that its work has not been in vain. And there need be no doubt that this will be the case."*

The development of the working class

* Joseph Stalin, *From Socialism to Communism in the Soviet Union*, p. 62, International Publishers, New York.

movement in the capitalist countries completely confirms this statement of Comrade Stalin who, by means of his great theoretical work in the further development of Marxism-Leninism, has given the Communist International and its Sections. and to the entire working class movement, a guide for action and for the path to victory.

Arising from the decisions of the Seventh World Congress of the Communist International, which were formed on the basis of the analysis of Comrade Stalin and with the bold initiative of Comrade Dimitroff, the workers in the capitalist countries are beginning, under the leadership of the Communist Parties, to form the united front and its alliance with the peasants, middle class and intellectuals in the People's Front. In the presence of the intensification of the struggle of the toiling masses for bread, peace and freedom, of the struggle against fascism and reaction, the masses are ever more clearly realizing the necessity of the establishment of unity of action and thus of the fulfilment of that world-shaking slogan of *The Communist Manifesto,* which has invested the May Day demonstrations with their revolutionary content: "Workingmen of all countries, unite!"

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Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, in the *Sunday Worker.*

United as Never Before

THE WORKERS of all countries have shown a very great interest in the Eighteenth Congress of the Bolsheviks. The historical report of Comrade Stalin, the resolutions of the Congress, the Third Five-Year Plan, the incomparable economic, military and moral strength of the Soviet Union give to the workers in the capitalist countries a new confidence in themselves and a new reliance.

In view of this indisputable victory of socialism in the Soviet Union and the effects of this victory on the international working class the greater part of the democratic and Socialist press was compelled to recognize the achievements of the Bolsheviks. But most of these papers sought at the same time to write down these achievements and to combat the growing sympathy and admiration shown by the masses for the Soviet Union. An example of this is to be found in an article published in the *Nuovo Avanti* of April 1, which stated that the Eighteenth Congress was not really a party congress because "political conflicts" and a "real discussion" had not taken place. Other Social-Democratic critics, although they admit with ill grace that the Soviet Union goes decisively forward despite all the unholy croaking of its opponents, hasten to add that they are disturbed by the complete unanimity of the Eighteenth Party Congress and that their democratic feelings can scarcely suffer the absence of an opposition.

These strange defenders of inner Party democracy who take it for granted that the working class is ideologically and politically divided regard it as a misfortune when the workers, as the result of many struggles and experiences, succeed in bringing about unity. The working class of the Soviet Union has succeeded, step by step, in overcoming all those tendencies which are hostile to socialism. They have convinced themselves of the correctness of Marxism-Leninism, of the reliability, consistency and victorious strength of the Party of Lenin and Stalin. As never before, they have closely gathered around Stalin, around the Central Committee of the Bolsheviks, around the flag of the great Party, which has achieved the building of socialism and has become an example to the workers of all countries.

This unity of the leading, revolutionary Party of the working class is the clearest expression and the strongest guarantee of the moral and political unity of the entire Soviet people. And this unity of the entire Soviet people is the foundation of the Soviet Union and gives to the land of socialism the strength which enables it to defend the cause of the international working class and of the people against the fascist aggressor. One would therefore expect that all Socialists, all anti-fascists would be heartily glad that the Eighteenth Congress of the Bolsheviks had manifested the unswerving unanimity and decisiveness of the Soviet workers.

This, however, is not the case. Various members of the leading circle of the Second International describe this unity as "disturbing." Many delegates spoke at the Congress—workers, peasants, factory managers, army commanders, representatives of all callings and of all nationalities — and their many-sided speeches formed a harmonious tribute to

the great Party of Lenin and Stalin, to its leadership and policy. Still there must be something wrong! Things are not quite right! What has happened to the "opposition"? How can there be democracy if there is no "opposition"? The existence of a democracy without an opposition cannot be justified. These Social-Democratic critics are unable to grasp and also do not wish to admit that it is because the policy of the Party of Lenin and Stalin is correct and that the correctness of the policy is recognized by the Party members.

For these people democracy means putting up one political view against another in such a way that an endless discussion goes on around a subject and every speaker finds an opponent so that finally resolutions are brought forth which satisfy nobody and which nobody feels to be really binding. The Second International is the embodiment of this kind of "democracy." After each individual has had his own say and said something different from the others a resolution is adopted which each one interprets in his own way. Only don't ask anybody about carrying out the resolution! To carry it out would endanger the beautiful "democracy" of the Second International.

The essence of this "democracy" is not the deed but the word. Everyone may talk as he chooses— but the question of what is to be done is passed over to the leaderships of the different parties. This so-called "democracy" of the Second International is nothing more than a fraud on the workers; speeches are made, voting takes place, proposals are put forward and resolutions are adopted and finally the meeting ends without having changed anything.

Do the workers need this kind of "democracy" which consists of words and not deeds? It is obvious that the workers need a different kind of democracy. They need that kind of democracy which not only expresses their desire to struggle but also leads forward to action. They need that kind of democracy which does not fritter away their ability to fight in talk but welds them strongly together. They need that kind of democracy that educates them and enables them to accomplish revolutionary deeds.

The exponents of that kind of "democracy" which is embodied in the Second International are rather proud of the fact that at their party congresses there are not only differences of opinion but that the presence of an opposition is a normal state of affairs. The Social-Democratic workers should devote some basic thinking to the significance of this and ask themselves why their parties in critical situations become almost the same as the parliaments of bourgeois democracy, which likewise have "government parties" and an "opposition."

Not all of the organized "oppositions" arise merely from the desire to oppose, from a pleasure in carrying out the "rules of the democratic game." Strong political groupings and counter groupings are always an expression of the class struggle—within the Socialist Parties as well as within the parliaments. Popular speakers and the founders of sects who come forward with various proposals can temporarily gather around themselves a large number of people, but such groups can only become factors of political importance when they represent certain class interests.

Citrine, Spaak, Paul Faure and other luminaries of the Second International represent the class interests of the bourgeoisie. They stand against that opposition of Socialists who represent the class interests of the proletariat. Between them the petty-bourgeois element is drawn here and there, and also those workers who are either not sufficiently politically educated or do not clearly see the way to carry their revolutionary views into practical action.

Let us recall the discussion which took place at the last special conference of the French Socialists. This discussion between the "Munichites" and the "Anti-Munichites," between the adherents of an "understanding" with fascism and the firm anti-fascists was much more than a mere difference of opinion—it was a part of the class strug-

gle. The representatives of the bourgeoisie within the working class movement stood in opposition to the representatives of the working class. This fact is not altered because honest but confused workers voted for Paul Faure and his clique; neither does the fact that workers vote for bourgeois parties and groups, and even in times of confusion, for the fascists, alter the character of these parties and groups. If the working class should fight consistently and as a whole for their own class interests that would signify that the rule of the bourgeoisie had ended once and for all time.

To make the working class as a whole conscious of its own interests, to free it of all hostile and foreign influences and to bring about its revolutionary unity is, indeed, the mighty task of the revolutionary party of the working class. Every deep-going "difference of opinion," which is regarded by our Social-Democratic critics as a sign of inner party democracy, is nothing more or less than an expression of the fact that the working class as a whole is not yet united and that the agents of the bourgeoisie still exercise an influence in their midst. This situation which appears to be an ideal one to the agents of the bourgeoisie and the deluded petty bourgeoisie is paid for by the working class with indescribable suffering in the course of heavy defeats.

In the ranks of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union there existed for many years an "opposition" which quite charmed the reactionary leaders of the Second International. The workers know today what this opposition was: the dregs of the counter-revolutionary bourgeoisie, the class enemy in the fortress of the working class. These people, about whose end our Social-Democratic critics wrung their hands and moaned, not only carried on a "discussion" with words but also with revolvers. They not only manifested their "differences" of opinion" with declamations, but also in the form of assassinations, acts of sabotage and crimes of all sorts. They developed the "political contradictions" between their fascist masters and the Soviet Union by means of treachery, espionage and conspiracy. The Party of Lenin and Stalin has rid itself of this gang. It was able to eliminate from its ranks that part that had fallen into the decay of capitalism. And after the removal of this poison there has been revealed in all its brilliant power that unity of the Party, the class and the people which had been fought for with such difficulty.

What the Social-Democratic critics really "miss" today in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union is the class struggle against the working class which is the ruling class. And, in fact, the Party of the Bolsheviks has overcome the protracted class struggle in its own ranks. It embodies the inviolable unity of the working class of the Soviet Union and the entire Soviet people.

Is that a mistake?

Only the enemies of socialism and the working class or hopelessly deluded petty bourgeois elements can regard this as a "mistake." The workers, who in their struggle against fascism are passionately striving for unity, will not regard this development as a "mistake" but as as the highest fulfillment of their own wishes. They do not see any value in the continuance of "political conflicts" within the working class. They think that it is of the greatest importance to unite the working class in the spirit of the revolution in order to end the mighty political conflict between fascism and democracy, between capitalism and socialism, in favor of the working class. And it is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union which leads them forward along this road.

Japanese Imperialism Wanted to Catch Fish

THE Japanese military clique has been waging its robber war on the Chinese people for over a year and a half, with the object of obtaining domination over the entire Far East. In this effort the Japanese robbers are encouraged by their German and Italian axis brothers. This encouragement, however, does not emanate from a purely magnanimous benevolence toward their bosom friend, but rather from the wish to have a share in the spoils. That is plainly revealed in the fascist press. In the *Völkischer Beobachter* of December, 1938, one could read that their interest in the Japanese war of prey in China amounts to the following:

"Whoever rules in the Yangtse, rules China . . . that mighty river is the traffic artery of an economic territory comprising several hundred millions of people. Its immense reserves of raw material and marketing possibilities are of the greatest importance not only to China and Japan, but in particular to Western interests. Today, over Hankow, center of the Yangtze basin, flutters the Japanese flag . . . and when the cannons are silent, the first ships flying the swastika will once more sail the Yangtze."

Germany and Italy also note with satisfaction that Japan is trying to crowd France, England and the U.S.A. out of the spheres of interest which they possess in the Chinese territory occupied by Japan. Moreover Japan is not voluntarily setting a limit to her aggressive actions.

Without worrying about the treaty of 1907 existing between France and herself, she occupied the Island of Hainan in February of this year. As the Western powers, in face of this Japanese aggression, reacted in the same way as they did to the annexations by German and Italian fascism in Europe, the Japanese newspaper *Kokumin Shimbun* was able to explain with blatant cynicism that "not only is the strategic value of Hongkong—symbol of British power in China—disappearing, but a heavy blow has also been dealt to the military base of Singapore, the effects of which will weigh heavily in future Japanese diplomacy."

The newspaper *Miyako Shimbun* writes that the attack on Hainan will suffice "to silence the threats of England, France and America." As the occupation of Hainan Island brought no serious consequences to Japan, she decided to place the Spratly Islands, east of the French Indo-China coast, under the sovereignty of the supreme government of Formosa. The Foreign Office in Tokio declared cynically:

". . . Since 1917 the unclaimed Spratly Islands have been developed economically by Japanese subjects. The Japanese government has reaffirmed its recognition of Japanese interests by the dispatch of warships. The lack of any administration for the protection of the life and property of Japanese, and the desire to avoid unnecessary differences with France have caused the Japanese government to take this step." (*Völkischer Beobachter.*)

In the Spratly Islands Japan has acquired an important military base, which is much nearer to the English and French colonies than all other Japanese bases. But what does England say about it? She regards the measures taken by Japan as "a strange manner" in which

to settle the vexed question of ownership of an island!

In his report to the Eighteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.), Comrade Stalin characterized the Western powers' reaction to the Japanese robbers as follows:

". . . When Japan started military operations, they let her have Shanghai, the vital center of foreign capital in China; they let her have Canton, a center of British monopoly influence in South China; they let her have Hainan, and they allowed her to surround Hongkong. Does not this look very much like encouraging the aggressor? It is as though they were saying: 'Embroil yourself deeper in war; then we shall see.' "*

The aggressive mood of Japanese ruling circles, still favored by the reactionary circles of the Western powers, was also manifest during the four months' negotiations between the Soviet Union and Japan over the fishing agreement.

Japan, which for very good reasons surely should have known that the policy of the Soviet Union was not to be identified with that of the Western powers, however, again tried during these negotiations to provoke the Soviet Union with audacious and stupid threats.

After the Japanese government had approached the Soviet government on the matter of a new fishing treaty, on November 25, 1938, Comrade Litvinov made known the attitude of the Soviet Union on this question. He observed that the Japanese government, which had taken over the guarantee for payment of the Chinese Eastern Railway, had not fulfilled its obligations and had violated various points of the Portsmouth Treaty. For this reason the Soviet government was prepared to come to a temporary agreement only. Moreover, it felt compelled to return to the system of auctioning off the fishing areas, and for strategic reasons to exclude Japan from about forty areas of the total number of fishing grounds made over to her.

Japan was enraged at this proposal of the Soviet Union. However, the Japanese ambassador declared that the Japanese government was prepared to grant a "magnanimous revision" of the question of payment, if the fishing agreement projected by the Japanese government, to last for a period of eight years, were signed immediately—not later than December 10, 1938—by the Soviet government.

Japan would enter no other fishing agreement either temporary or long term. In the opinion of the Japanese ambassador, any change in the agreement or any violation of the status quo "would deal a blow at the peculiarly historical feelings of the Japanese nation." During the conversations the Japanese ambassador repeatedly referred to the possibility of a conflict if the Soviet government did not yield.

In Japan, too, an attempt was made to emphasize these demands. On February 15 the newspaper *Japan Advertiser* reported that in the Japanese Parliament a group of 83 deputies had introduced a resolution concerning the fishing agreement, which was unanimously adopted and which summoned the government "to take rapid and appropriate measures for the protection of these rights and interests." During the discussions on this resolution a deputy of the Minseito Party said:

"The fishing concessions are a trophy of the Russo-Japanese war. . . . There is a limit to our patience. . . . A mere exchange of diplomatic phrases can no longer settle this question. . . . The government must tackle the Soviet Union with the strongest determination and be prepared for all eventualities."

A deputy of the Seyukai Party declared:

"The fishing enterprises are resolved to continue to fish unhampered. The government likewise says that perhaps the only thing that can be done is to go over to 'free fishing.' In these circumstances we must be just as prepared as if we were planning to land on enemy territory."

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* Joseph Stalin, *From Socialism to Communism in the Soviet Union*, p. 13, International Publishers, New York.

A deputy of the fascist Tohokai Party declared that the government was pursuing a weak policy and recommended that it follow the example of German and Italian diplomacy. In doing this he had forgotten only one detail—that this was a question of negotiating with the Soviet Union. The gentlemen of Japan should have known that since 1936 on the Soviet Union does not allow treaties to be dictated to her by threats. At that time the fishing agreement was also at the fore, and then, as now, a new fishing agreement was to replace the agreement of 1928. About the time this agreement was to be signed, Japan concluded with Germany the so-called Anti-Comintern Pact. The Soviet government responded to this by refusing to sign the new fishing contract. As a result there was only a short-term agreement for the duration of one year. In 1937 a second short-term agreement was concluded, to expire in December, 1938.

At this time, just as in 1928, Japan wanted to take permanent possession of the fishing grounds. The German fascists, who cannot refrain from meddling in foreign affairs, attempted to help their Japanese friends press home their demands. They showed little skill in doing this. On December 24, 1938, the *Berliner Borsenzeitung* wrote:

"The Japanese-Russian quarrel really goes back to 1870. Fishing is to the national food of the Japanese what grain is to Europe. . . . For Soviet Russia the battle for the fishing grounds is a highly political issue. . . . Fish compelled Japan to recognize the Soviet Union. Fish also caused Japan to evacuate its North Sakhalin possession. Recently Litvinov even brought on the Anti-Comintern Pact through his negotiations with Ambassador Togo. . . ."

Thus the German fascist press recognized, against its own will, the might and consistent attitude of the Soviet Union. It was, however, prudent enough not to mention the real basis of the "fight for the fishing grounds," namely, the fact that Japan wished to acquire simultaneously with the fishing grounds strategic bases for a future war of aggression. The German press also consciously omits pointing out that Japan, in addition to the so-called "Anti-Comintern pact," is striving toward an open war alliance of the three aggressive states—Germany, Italy and Japan. Recently the preparations for this war alliance have become more and more prominent.

The Soviet Union does not allow itself to be intimidated by such tricks of extortion. When, during the negotiations, the Japanese ambassador raised the objection that the Soviet Union was turning the negotiations on the fishing agreement into a political question, and that the alterations to the agreement contradicted the new Soviet Constitution, Comrade Litvinov gave him a clear and unmistakable answer.

He declared that the prolongation of, or alteration to, the agreement depended on the free will of the Soviet Union. For her there were no obligations in the treaty to the "historic sentiment of the Japanese people," if one can speak at all of a serious blow to these sentiments through a slight reduction in the number of Japanese fishing concessions.

Comrade Litvinov emphasized, moreover, that recently a colleague of the Japanese Foreign Minister had publicly declared that the Japanese government was preparing for war against the Soviet Union. If, in the opinion of the Japanese government, such declarations and pacts, hostile to the Soviet Union, which the Japanese government have concluded, provoke no tension in relations, it was probably not to be feared that tension between the Soviet Union and Japan would arise through a reduction of 10 per cent in the fishing concessions. In no way did the Soviet government wish to transform the fishing question into a political problem, but this did not signify that the Soviet Union, in view of the Japanese government's policy toward the U.S.S.R. and the public declarations made by her official representatives, had to ignore the aims of her policy and not take the necessary measures for the protection of her coasts and frontiers.

The Japanese learned at Lake Khasan how the Soviet Union protects her frontier. And, in the previous and in the present negotiations on the fishing agreements, the Soviet Union has also proved that she does not allow herself to be argued out of her rights. The Japanese had no alternative but to sign the short-term agreement which the Soviet Union had of her own free will put to them. They declared their agreement both to the system of auctioning the fishing areas and to the withdrawal of thirty-seven areas.

The boasts of "historical feelings" stuck like fishbones in the throats of the Japanese aggressors. From the muddy water of fascist diplomacy, the Japanese extortioners landed on firm Soviet earth, and there behaved like fish on dry land. Moscow is neither London nor Paris. This the Japanese fishermen have once more experienced. The peoples of the world were able to ascertain that the extortionate demands of aggressive states remain ineffective when met by calm determination.

"The gulf between victorious socialism and decaying parasitic capitalism has grown still wider during the past five years. The U.S.S.R. is moving upwards, to the peaks of a classless society, to communism. The capitalist world is on the downward course to economic crises, reaction and wars. This means that the general crisis of the capitalist system has become more profound. And the more capitalism become entangled in its contradictions, the more desperate are the measures it resorts to in the attempt to escape from its plight. Hence the intensification of the capitalist offensive against the working people, the intensification of fascist terror, the assumption of the offensive by fascism in the international arena and the new imperialist war. Hence the growing threat of foreign military attack on the land of socialism, the realization of whose significance as a *stronghold of peace and of resistance to imperialist conquest and wars is growing immensely in the minds of millions of working people in the capitalist countries.*"—D. Z. Manuilsky, *The World Communist Movement*, pp. 14-15.

Fascist Aggression in the Balkans

ON APRIL 7 Italian troops occupied Tirana, the capital of Albania, and the Albanian port, Durazzo. German fascism, which in its press shamelessly terms this new act of violence of Italy against little Albania an "act of peace," has already unloaded 250 heavy coastal guns of the Krupp works in the Albanian harbor of Valona, and is now busy fortifying the Otranto road for 30 kilometers north and south of its narrowest point. In the case of this latest deed of violence also, German and Italian fascism have closely collaborated.

In spite of the vastly superior power of the aggressor, the Albanian people defended its independence by force of arms. It could not successfully resist the superior power of the blood-reeking invaders because it was isolated in its fight and because Chamberlain under the umbrella of his words against the aggressors is angling for a new Munich. Among the people in Britain, however, the feeling is growing against the fascist war-makers and the demand for a broad and firm peace front against fascism is becoming louder and louder.

Fascism knows that a consistent defense of peace by a peace alliance between England, France, the Soviet Union and the U.S.A. would put a halt to its aggressive advance, to its policy of plunder and conquest. It is not only today that fascism has become aware of this. It is just for that reason that from the very beginning it has attempted to strengthen its economic and political influence and to secure a firm foothold in all countries which it was lusting after, so as to prepare their subjugation. In the foremost place it is the Balkan countries that are being "prepared" by fascism in this way.

The first stage was the period before Munich, the period of "peaceful" economic and political expansion of German fascism in the Balkans. In this period German imperialism created the first points of support for Hitler aggression by means of its economic penetration of the Balkans which went hand in hand with the "cultural" work of the Gestapo.

The second stage of German expansion began immediately after Munich. After the blow against Czechoslovakia and the dismemberment of the latter, thanks to the shameful capitulation of England and France in the September and October days, German fascism decided to utilize as rapidly as possible the confusion and disillusionment which had been caused among the Balkan peoples. A sort of "economic storm attack" was opened in the Balkans.

The German Minister of Economy, Funk, visited the capitals of the Balkan countries and exerted every effort in the tense atmosphere of Munich to force enslaving trade treaties on the states by the "path of negotiation," trade treaties which were intended to make far-reaching encroachments on their economic independence. New trade treaties were arrivd at with Jugoslavia and Rumania. These treaties were a decisive step toward drawing the Balkan countries into Goering's four-year plan or— as some bourgeois newspapers expressed it at the time—toward conversion of these countries into a sort of dominion of Hitler Germany. The Hitler press wrote of the creation of a uniform economic region stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea and Aegean Sea, from Hamburg and

Stettin to Constanza and Salonika.

In this period the Gestapo and its agencies also took the offensive. In Rumania the Iron Guard attempted a putsch; in Jugoslavia, Stoyadinovich attempted a fascist overthrow; in Bulgaria the chief of the general staff, General Peyev, was murdered and at the same time a demand made for "revision" of the frontiers; in Greece fascist Italy took measures for a new fascist upheaval.

In this period Great Britain, which had given Hitler Germany a completely free hand, hoped to be able to direct the fascist aggression against the Soviet Union. Chamberlain himself has indicated that Germany, owing to her geographical position, is bound to play a big role in southeastern Europe.

The third stage of German aggression in the Balkans began with the annexation of Czechoslovakia. German fascism is attempting to anticipate a possible swing over of opinion in England and France and to hurl itself as rapidly as possible on the booty which Chamberlain has given it. Immediate military pressure on Rumania and Jugoslavia has begun. Italian fascism has intervened in order to assure itself of its share of the booty. On April 7 fascist Italy carried out its predatory attack on Albania. Rumania was faced by an ultimatum from Germany, accompanied on the order of Berlin by concentration of troops on the Hungarian-Rumanian frontier and by military demonstrations on the part of Bulgaria at the Dobrudga frontier. The Rumanian government capitulated to Hitler and on March 23 it concluded a treaty by which Rumania is incorporated in the "Goering plan" and its independence put in jeopardy. By this aggressive step Hitler Germany wanted to determine the extent of the readiness of the present ruling circles in Rumania and how far one would have to count on counter-action on the part of the big powers of the west or of the Balkan countries grouped in the Balkan Entente. Proof is afforded by the strengthening of the undermining work of the fascist aggressors in Rumania and Jugoslavia, the fomenting of national conflicts and promotion of separatist tendencies in these countries, the encouragement of Hungary and Bulgaria to put forward revisionist demands, etc.

As was to be expected, Britain and France have not opposed any serious resistance to this first attempt of Hitler's to enslave the Balkans. They did not want to renounce the hope that the aggression would take its course in a southeasterly direction, in the direction of the Soviet Union, or that in the plundering and partition of the Balkans, the contradictions between the two partners of the axis would be so intensified that it would be possible to withdraw Italy from the fascist bloc with Germany. The fascist bloc answered this by the seizure of Albania. Thereby it made the second decisive step toward invasion of the Balkan countries. By the occupation of Albania the fascist aggressors have penetrated into the interior of the Balkans, they have made public their endeavor to take the Balkans in a pincers-like grip, threatening it now not only from the north and northeast but also from the west and southwest.

The eruption of the fascists in the Balkans is not only a tremendous danger for the Balkan peoples but also a severe blow to the interests and prestige of Britain and France. It is a blow against the system of defense of France and also Britain, a blow against the countries of the Little Entente and Balkan Entente, which at one time were regarded by France and Britain as their natural allies. It constitutes a very serious threat to British predominance in the Mediterranean, a threat to Britain's land and sea routes to the Near East, to Mosul and Persia, to the Arabian countries and India. It represents a decisive step towards the realization of the old imperialist dream of the "Pan-Germans": the push from Berlin to Baghdad.

How did the ruling circles in the Balkan countries react to the fascist invasion, and how was it taken by the masses of the people?

In Rumania, the ruling circles capit-

ulated to the threat of German fascism and gave up their primary positions. The wide masses of the people, however, hate the fascist aggressors and are demanding determined resistance to them. This mood found expression in a memorandum handed to the King by the leaders of the dissolved parties of the democratic opposition, with Maniu and Dino Bratianu at the head. This memorandum lays down that the present government, which supports itself on the so-called party of "National Regeneration," does not enjoy the confidence of the masses of the people; it puts forward the demand for the restoration of parliamentarianism, constitutional liberties and the democratic rights of the people, as well as the formation of a government of the parties of the democratic opposition, a government of national salvation, which would be in a position to unite the whole people and to defend the economic and political independence of the country.

Jugoslavia, which after the occupation of Albania by Italy and Germany is being held in a vise-like grip and moreover is hemmed in by two revisionist states, Hungary and Bulgaria, that are making territorial claims on her, is now confronted by the danger of dismemberment and enslavement. Its position is further complicated by the continually sharpening internal antagonisms, especially the sharpening of the Croatian question. The present Tsvetkovich government is adopting a dangerous attitude. It has not cut itself free from the shameful internal and foreign policy of Stoyadinovich and continues the game with the aggressors.

Although the parties of the democratic opposition and the masses of the people have very great sympathy for the Soviet Union and set great hopes on the latter, the government has not yet restored normal relations with the Soviet Union. The fact that this government, thanks to its pitiable attitude during the occupation of Albania, has won the open thanks of Mussolini — which calls to mind Hitler's thanks to Stoyadinovich during the occupation of Austria—sufficiently characterizes its policy, which has nothing in common with the protection of the national interests of Jugoslavia. As in Rumania, here also the democratic opposition parties are demanding the formation of a democratic government of national salvation.

In Bulgaria, the ruling circles in the recent period have adopted an openly revisionist policy. They are demanding the Doboruja from Rumania, and Thrace, with an outlet on the Aegean Sea, from Greece. In spite of their "eternal pact of friendship" with Jugoslavia, they are also making territorial claims on her, and tomorrow they will perhaps do the same for Turkey. This adventurist policy of the fascist-friendly Bulgarian bourgeoisie finds no support among the masses of the people, rather it encounters the determined resistance of the workers, peasants, urban petty bourgeoisie, and even of the democratic bourgeoisie itself. The feeling of the masses of the people finds clear expression in a series of interpellations of the leaders of the democratic opposition in parliament, condemning the government's policy of adventure and demanding the creation of a defensive bloc of the Balkan countries against the aggressors. The fact that on April 11 the opposition deputies demonstratively walked out of the parliamentary session was also a mark of the protest against the government's policy.

In Greece, the masses of the people hate the monarchist-fascist dictatorship of Metaxas. But they hate still more the German and Italian aggressors who, after the annexation of Albania, are directly menacing the freedom and independence of the Greek people.

In Turkey, the democratic press is sounding the alarm against the menacing danger of fascist aggression; it is coming out for consolidation of all national forces around the government, for a common front of defense of the Balkan countries, indeed even for the creation of a Balkan federation.

The defensive struggle of the small and unarmed Albanian people against

the fascist aggressors has evoked great enthusiasm among the masses of the people in the Balkan countries. This struggle has heightened their determination to wage the struggle to the end against fascism and capitulation. In face of the daily increasing fascist danger, the Balkan peoples are faced with the historical task of uniting to form a front of defense against the fascist war-makers, and by their resolute joint action to compel Britain and France also to take up a clear position. The peoples of all countries want peace, they want the union of the non-aggressive and threatened states against fascism. This desire of the widest masses of the people finds its strongest backing in the policy of the Soviet Union, which directs its efforts "to strengthen international friendly relations with the working people of all countries which are interested in peace and friendship between the peoples." What is at issue is to unite the endeavors of the separate Balkan countries and to oppose the war bloc of the fascists by a peace bloc of the Balkan peoples which can offer a vigorous resistance to the further penetration of fascism.

"The Munich agreement was the first serious attempt to put this perfidious but hopeless plan of the British reactionary bourgeoisie into practice. It was not peace that the reactionary conspirators of Munich brought mankind, but the prospects of a new imperialist world war. In Munich they put an end even to that anemic European 'equilibrium' which to some extent restrained the fascist aggressors in their plans of conquest. Under pressure of Germany and Italy, the reactionary cliques of France, tied to the apron strings of the British reactionaries, put an end with their own hands to the system of alliances which they had created after the imperialist World War of 1914-18, thereby paving the way for the transformation of France into a second-rate power."—D. Z. Manuilsky, *The World Communist Movement*, pp. 12-13.

German Fascism Needs Cannon Fodder

GERMAN fascism, having degraded the common people to the level of slaves through terror and coercion, is at present trying to increase the birthrate by forcible measures. "We shall never tire," writes the *Völkischer Beobachter* of March 4, "of demanding with maximum pressure the fulfilment of his biological duty by every potent German." This "pressure" consists, among other things, of a warning given to newly-married recruits, who apply for the allowance due their wives for the duration of their military service, that this allowance will continue for the first nine months only. If at the end of that period the wife had not conceived a child, the allowance will be withdrawn and work in a factory or on a farm offered her instead. This is clear and unambiguous. Either the German wives have children, and at a rationalized biological rate, or they are condemned to forced labor.

"The birthrate of greater Germany," declares the State Department of Statistics, "has been fixed at 1,652,000 per annum." This is the figure, they continue, "which we require in order to maintain our status as the German nation." "As yet this figure is short by 166,000, that is, about five hundred births per day."

The lack of increase in the population has become, in fascist Germany, in the words of the Essen *National Zeitung* of March 23, a "question of life or death for German economy." Had "German economy" been directed to supply the necessities of the German population, it would not have reason to complain of the lack of increase in the population and shortage of skilled labor. By far the greater part of the German economy, however, produces at present exclusively for war needs. It does not produce any goods for consumption, it concentrates exclusively on the stocking of arsenals, in the production of guns and tanks, warships and bombers and in the building of frontier fortifications and military roads.

The overwhelming majority of the German working people have been engaged on this work, which will not bring anything useful to them but only death and destruction. This work drains the marrow from the bones of the working people, men and women, old and young alike. For this work the German people have to sacrifice their health, happiness and lives. Yet German fascism demands an increase in the birthrate in spite of this exhausting work. It demands it with an unprecedented cynicism. For instance, the Essen *National Zeitung* of March 23 writes:

"The supply of fit people in numbers sufficient for the requirements of our German nation can only be met when, as far as possible, every production group of the population becomes biologically self-supporting. . . ."

What does it mean? It means that children, grandchildren and great grandchildren will be obliged to follow the occupation of their ancestors. Miners' children shall remain miners. landworkers' children shall remain landworkers, those who are judges today shall have children as "judges," he who today is known as "Fuehrer" shall have children "Fuehrers" as well. In other words, tyrants beget tyrants—slaves remain slaves! This article continues as follows:

"In the interest of our economy we should certainly attempt to do everything possible to overcome the lack of

skilled labor by means of training, etc. Yet it is impossible to create out of socially worthless (asocial) elements, disciplined factory workers. When . . . in the different trades the apprentices are below the recognized intelligence standard, it is a practical demonstration of the fact that in recent years the healthy families had not enough children."

In this manner the sufferers themselves are made responsible for the maladies and mental retrogression which have increased to an alarming extent since Hitler came to power. Thus the antisocial elements of the German people are increased daily by the conditions of life forced upon them. Under the name of "asocial," German fascism also includes people whose strength has been wasted and who are unable to recover their capacity to work owing to their unhealthy living conditions. It is not the industrial workers alone who are robbed of their ability to work. The countryside does not present a different picture. The Essen *National Zeitung* of March 28 writes the following:

"Women especially show signs of overexertion. Wives and mothers on our farms get old prematurely. The number of children decreases to such an extent that some of the villages have a lower birthrate than the towns. . . . The youth is also showing signs of physical overwork. . . ."

The head of the Reich Food Committee, Gustav Behrens, writes in the *Völkischer Beobachter* of March 9, about the adverse influence of "the burdens of country women . . . on the number and health of their children." In his article he quotes some concrete instances:

"Village H. of W. parish, peasant M., 130 acre farm, no farm hands, wife had miscarriage.

"Village ST., peasant Schl., wife overworked, miscarriage.

"Village N., peasant S., able hardworking, but owing to complete overburdening of his wife, they have only two children. According to the testimony of S. they have no time to think about children.

"Village ST., peasant K., hardworking and able, married for several years, no children owing to overwork of his wife. . . ."

The prospect of an increased birthrate is certainly dim in fascist Germany. This aim cannot be reached by "practical measures" only, writes the Essen *National Zeitung*. That is why fascism is attempting to encourage the people in the fulfilment of their "biological duties" by means of the worst trickster methods of a mountebank in a market place.

On March 28 a German broadcast could not have made itself any clearer in this respect. Various military centers of so-called Greater Germany were linked together in this broadcast. Soldiers from a bunker of a ship on the Rhine (Muhlheim) conversed with Tilsit. Girls played no small part in their talks. A soldier from Tilsit followed, describing the occupation of Memel. In his story the girls were not forgotten. As the soldier did not mention the matter himself, he was assisted by the announcer so that the soldier might say over the ether: Yes, the girls were there all right, the quartermasters had seen to it. The soldiers fulfilled their "biological duty."

In Moravsky Ostrava a Madam Walter was invited to speak over the microphone as a witness of the "popularity" of the German soldiers in Czechoslovakia. Madam Walter, who has a daughter, has soldiers billeted in her home. The radio announcer wanted to know something else besides. Is the daughter betrothed to a German soldier, perhaps the one who is standing by her side at that moment? No, she is not. The soldier has a financee in the old country. Madam Walter is quite pleased about it, because "one should be very careful with girls, soldiers are here today and gone tomorrow. Like sailors, they have a girl in every port. . . ." The radio announcer is not at all pleased about it. What are the German soldiers going to do in their billets without Czech girls? And what will the Czech girls do if every German soldier has a sweetheart at home? What

is going to happen to the fulfilment of their "biological duty"?

Germany needs soldiers. German women, who for too long have had to bear the fascist regime, no longer enjoy the fulfilment of their "biological duties." It falls to the lot of young girls of the countries recently conquered by fascism to make up for the lack of cannon fodder and for the increase in the population. Probably the fascist gentlemen have recalled to mind the words of their "scientific" colleague, Dr. Wilhelm Stapel, who in January, 1935, wrote the following in the Hamburg newspaper *Deutsches Volkstrum*, edited by himself:

"No army exists without its camp-followers. Canteen girls and market women form a part of them. . . . The warrior . . . always faced with life and death considers girls as a booty. To procure girls as booty is the age-long custom of all warfare. . . . The manliness of our times makes us inevitably take girls as booty. The wife becomes her husband's hostage and her children, hostage's children, soldier's children. . . ."

According to this "theory," the whole female population of the regions occupied by German fascism becomes its "booty." One of the first "blessings" bestowed by German fascism is witnessed in venereal disease hospitals filled to the doors, and in many girls without husbands but with a disease or a child. These "soldiers' children" are condemned by German fascism, according to the "biological law," to serve as cannon fodder in the coming predatory wars. The armies of German fascism contribute, not only a large booty, but the procreation of the missing 166,000 children according to "plan" and by means of a military fulfilment of their biological duty.

"If the so-called democratic states pursued a firm policy of resistance to the fascist aggressors, combined with *economic pressure*, this would be a quite effective means of forcing the fascist states to retreat. This would be a real policy of peace. It would be supported by all the peoples. It would bring back to the side of France, England and the United States the small states which the Munich policy has thrown into confusion and dismay. It would be a policy of consolidating the democratic gains of the peoples that would be supported by the international working class."—D. Z. Manuilsky, *The World Communist Movement*, p. 33.

The Imperialist War and the Working Class

BY K. FUNK

"THE new imperialist war became a fact," said Stalin in his report to the Eighteenth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks).

The war group of Germany, Italy and Japan is carrying on this war in Europe and the Far East against the interests of England, France and the U.S.A. The extension of this war to the African colonial possessions of England and France draws noticeably nearer.

The most remarkable stages of the second imperialist war are: the annexation of Ethiopia by Italy, the fascist intervention of Germany and Italy in Spain, Japan's invasion of China, the annexation of Austria, the Sudeten district and finally of the whole of Czechoslovakia by Germany, the creation of German and Italian spheres of influence in occupied Spain and Spanish Morocco, the consolidation of German and Italian fascism at strategically important points, such as the Balearics and the Atlantic coast of Spain, the occupation of the Island of Hainan by Japan, the occupation of Memel by German troops and the occupation of Albania by Italy.

German fascism is building a colonial empire for itself in the heart of Europe, attempting to crowd England and France out of the economic life of Southeast Europe once and for all and with the declared aim of ensuring for itself, in Central and Southeast Europe, the colonial hinterland that it needs in order to be able to supersede England and France on the mainland of Western Europe and thus be able to set up German imperialist hegemony over this part of Europe. At present the regions around the Mediterranean and the Balkans are the theater of the struggle for imperialist domination in Central and Western Europe. At the same time, these regions are the bases for the attacks of German and Italian fascism on Africa. Comrade Stalin said:

"It is a distinguished feature of the new imperialist war that it has not yet become universal or world war. The war is being waged by aggressor states which in every way infringe upon the interests of the non-aggressive states, primarily England, France and the U.S.A., while the latter draw back and retreat, making concession after concession to the aggressor.

"Thus we are witnessing an open redivision of the world and spheres of influence at the expense of the non-aggressive states, without the least attempt at resistance, and even with a certain amount of connivance on the part of the latter."*

Faced with this development, one must asked—are the masses in the countries threatened aware of the dangers which are bound up with any further extension of this imperialist war and with the possibility of its suddenly changing into a second imperialist world war? It is not only a matter of the specific national interests of England, France and the U.S.A. It is not only a matter of the bourgeoisie of these countries being ejected from the positions they held up to now or are still holding. It is also a

* Joseph Stalin, *From Socialism to Communism in the Soviet Union*, pp. 11-12, International Publishers, New York.

matter of the suppression of numerous small states and the enslavement of many hitherto independent nations, of the prevention of the liberation of the colonial peoples; and it is concerned with the fact that the elementary vital interests of the people of England, France and the U.S.A. are endangered by this development.

The question must be answered in the affirmative when one considers the numerous and increasingly indignant protests against the fascist acts of violence, the universal readiness to help nations, like the Spanish nation, which resist, and the pressure of the masses for the creation of guarantees against further encroachments of the war bloc.

But are the masses, are the workers, clear about what they must do in order to prevent further advance by the fascist aggressors? Has the working class grasped the fact that it has a special task to fulfil in this struggle which is taking place during the second imperialist war, against its further extension and against its transformation into an imperialist world war?

These questions can be answered only in a very limited and restricted sense, for at the present time a section of the working class is still occupied with "pacifist" illusions and is under the influence of Social-Democratic politicians whose attitude hinders and prevents the adoption of a clear standpoint by all sections of the working class and the exercise of the class power of the proletariat in this struggle.

Instead of employing every effort to make the international union of the working class an open and effective force—by which the common interests of all nations and groups threatened by fascism would receive firm support—the Social-Democratic leaders carry on a policy of disintegration of the working class and even of their own international, and they attempt to make the working class a hanger-on of the bourgeoisie in individual countries.

That is the case with the anti-unity leaders of the Labor Party who, faced with international perils, exclude and abuse the supporters of a decisive policy against the fascist warmongers and against their English accomplices.

That is the case with those leaders of the French Socialists who persisted in their stand on a murderous "non-intervention" policy towards Spain and refused to learn from the danger to France bound up with this policy and the weakness of the working class in relation to reaction in France which has resulted.

It applies also to the leaders of the Belgian, Danish, and Dutch Social-Democratic Parties who were shown by the last elections that their policy is at the same time weakening the working class and driving the wavering middle classes into the arms of the bourgeoisie. It applies to the responsible people in the Hungarian Social-Democratic Party and to the leaders of the Polish Socialist Party who applauded their own bourgeoisie when, in the shadow of German fascism, they took part in the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia.

Instead of working to ensure that the working class of every country exerts its strength to prevent the reactionary accomplices of the war bloc and the capitulators from disarming the nations in the face of pressure from the war bloc, certain Social-Democrat leaders weaken the vigilance of the masses by persuading them that the questions of foreign policy and national defense are matters for the bourgeoisie who are in power. The panic-makers from the ranks of the "Integral Pacifists" and the "Realistic politicians," like Faure and Grimm play into one another's hands. While the one lets the reactionary bourgeois circles have a free hand under the pretext of "fundamental opposition" to wars "as a whole," the other plays into the hands of the same circles by making the questions of national defense an object for barter in coalition policy.

This practice of Social-Democracy constitutes a direct peril for the working class and for the national movement against the fascist warmongers and against their imperialist accomplices. For it is still apparent that Social-Democratic leaders act on the principle which

Kautsky represented in 1914: "The International is no effective weapon in war time, it is essentially an instrument of peace." (*Neue Zeit*, February 27, 1914.)

But in the first imperialist war in the post-war era, the international working class had more than enough experience of the sacrifices and setbacks to which this treacherous maxim led. It is just for the struggle against imperialist war and exactly during that war that the working class needs its international organized power if it wants to prevent itself from becoming a plaything and cannon-fodder in the service of imperialist reaction. The working class is the force on whose determination and readiness for independent action it still depends to a large extent whether universal war can be prevented and universal peace saved. But the working class dare not close its eyes to the possibility of a further extension of that war.

In this event and in just this event, it cannot refrain from stepping forward as an independent factor. The feeling of repugnance towards war which lives in every progressive being and places a gulf between him and the inhuman hordes of the fascist warmongers must not lead to the working class being led astray by pacifist illusions which make it the easier to overwhelm and crush it. Nor can the working class decide its attitude to war if it tails after its own bourgeoisie.

The question is a political one which at the present time is of prime importance. It can only be decided politically and only then can it be decided rightly if the working class, in making its decision, keeps before its eyes the great goal, the conquest of socialism and the defense of democracy.

A CONCRETE ESTIMATE OF WAR IS NECESSARY

Lenin, the leader of the Bolshevik Party, the only party of the working class in the first imperialist war, which carried out the decisions of the International Socialist Congresses of Stuttgart (1907) and Basle (1912) and ended the war with proletarian revolution, repeatedly dealt in his writings with the relation of the working class to war. From these, and from the wealth of the experience of the Bolshevik Party in the struggle against imperialist war (which have been related most clearly and in their most easily understandable form in the recently published *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, the workers of all countries have much to learn for the struggle against the second imperialist war. The teachings which Lenin and Stalin have handed on to the international workers' movement and with which they have enriched Marxist theory will help the workers to find their way out of the labyrinth of "theoretical" confusion and practical dissolution set up by the ideologists of the Second International. These teachings are supported by the authority of a Party which alone led the people of their country to victory over the bourgeoisie of their own country; whose consistent struggle against imperialist war during the first imperialist war roused the best forces and minds of the workers' movement of other countries, and which, even during the first imperialist war, became the central leading force of the international struggle against imperialism.

Lenin wrote in 1916 in an article, "A Caricature of Marxism and 'Imperialist Economism.'"

"How is one to find the 'real essence' of a war, how is one to define it? War is the continuation of policy. It is necessary to study the policy before the war, the policy which has led to war and which has brought it about. If the policy were an imperialist one, *i.e.*, defending the interests of finance capital, plundering and oppressing colonies and foreign countries, then the war resulting from this policy is also an imperialist war. If the policy was one of national liberation, *i.e.*, one which expressed the mass movement against national oppression, then the war resulting from such a policy is a war of national liberation."*

Lenin described the war which broke

* Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XIX, p. 199. Russian ed.

out in 1914 as an imperialist war for:

"The war is not being waged because one side seeks to abolish national oppression and the other to defend it. The war is being waged between two groups of oppressors, between two robbers, to decide how to divide the booty." *

But already during the World War, Lenin opposed most decisively those Socialist who would draw from the imperialist character of the war then in progress the conclusion that, in the epoch of imperialism, there could only be imperialist wars. In an article, "On the Junius Pamphlet," Lenin paid tribute to Rosa Luxemburg's attempt to bring out the decisive influence of the "imperialist milieu" in the existing war; but he saw further and deeper when he wrote:

"It will only be a mistake to exaggerate this truth, to depart from the Marxist demand to be concrete, to transfer the estimate of the present war to all wars possible under imperialism, to forget the national movements *against* imperialism. The sole argument in defense of this thesis that 'there can be no more national wars' is that the world is divided up between a handful of 'big' imperialist powers, that consequently every war, even if it were a national war at the outset, becomes *converted* into an imperialist war, affecting the interests of one of the imperialist powers or coalitions." **

The Bolshevik Party, which, during the World War of 1914 carried on a forthright struggle against the dominant tendency of the Socialist International to social patriotism and social chauvinism, thus did not deal abstractly with the relation of the working class to war. In the *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)* the position of the Bolsheviks is explained in the following clear sentences:

"It was not to *every kind* of war that the Bolsheviks were opposed. They were only opposed to wars of conquest, imperialist wars. The Bolsheviks held that there are two kinds of war:

"(a) *Just* wars, wars that are not wars of conquest but wars of liberation, waged to defend the people from foreign attack and from attempts to enslave them, or to liberate the people from capitalist slavery, or, lastly, to liberate colonies and dependent countries from the yoke of imperialism; and

"(b) *Unjust* wars, wars of conquest, waged to conquer and enslave foreign countries and foreign nations.

"Wars of the first kind the Bolsheviks supported. As to wars of the second kind, the Bolsheviks maintained that a resolute struggle must be waged against them to the point of revolution and the overthrow of one's own imperialist government."*

What conclusions result from this political standpoint of the Party of Lenin and Stalin, with regard to the relation of the working class to the second imperialist war?

WAR IS THE CONTINUATION OF POLICY

The policy pursued in the imperialist war in the period of redivision of the world is, on the part of the aggressor states, a policy of barbarous suppression of their own people, of terroristic, brutal constraint of the masses, of unlimited exploitation of the working class, of robbery of all productive sections of the people in the interests of the most reactionary circles of finance capital, and of the most extensive drive towards imperialist expansion.

This policy and its pursuance, imperialist acts of violence, invasions, annexations and wars, is at the present time the foremost danger for *all* people. Fascist invasion threatens human culture and its institutions, imperils the democratic achievements of nations, threatens to suffocate national independent life and the most elementary expressions of national life of the suppressed peoples.

The further advance of the fascist

* *Ibid.*, p. 200.
** *Ibid.*, p. 181.

* *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (Bolsheviks)*, pp. 167-168.

war bloc, the extension of its dominance to other countries, like Austria, Czechoslovakia, Spain, Albania and others, throws the working class of the oppressed countries back into the bondage of serfdom, destroys the foundations of existence of millions of peasants, craftsmen and other members of the middle class, disorganizes industry, trade and technique by subjecting them to the war economy of the fascist powers. The heavy, stifling atmosphere of barrack yards and prison which hangs today over the whole of Germany, at any further advance of the fascist war bloc would poison the life of the peoples who come under its yoke.

Faced by these perils, all nations have fundamentally *one* common interest: to prevent German fascism and its allies from hurling any more nations into the abyss of slavery and subjection. Faced by these dangers and by the hard lessons taught by the fate of the peoples of Austria and Czechoslovakia, all nations recognize *one* common enemy, German fascism and its allies. It is the common task of all those who are threatened to erect a secure dam against the dark torrent of fascism; to subdue German fascism and its allies, if they continue their imperialist acts of violence and overrun Europe any further with war; to inflict on them an annihilating defect; that, and nothing else, must be the common goal of all real friends of a real peace and of all progressive people.

Common interest in the repulse and defeat of the fascist aggressors and the common duties of all progressive people and all threatened countries against the common enemy were most clearly expressed in the well-known telegram sent by Stalin to Jose Diaz, in which he says:

". . . that the liberation of Spain from the yoke of the fascist reactionaries is not a private matter for Spaniards but is common cause for the whole of advanced and progressive humanity."

In this sense too the war in China is dealt with by the Resolution of the Presidium of the Executive Committee of the Communist International of 1938, which says, concerning the relation of the international working class to this war:

"All progressive mankind realizes that the great Chinese people are defending against barbarous violence not only their hearths and homes, not only their liberty and independence, but also the cause of the liberty and peace of all peoples. Should the Japanese fascist militarists succeed in subjugating the Chinese people, this would mean an extraordinary intensification and extension of fascist aggression both in Asia, in the Pacific, as well as in Europe and other parts of the world, whereas China's victory will constitute a severe blow to the plans of conquest of all the fascist aggressors. Thus the war of liberation conducted by the Chinese people is a most important component part of the general struggle of the world proletariat and of progressive mankind as a whole against the violence of barbarous fascism."*

This attitude of the Communist International to the wars of nations attacked by the fascist aggressors corresponds to Lenin's insistence on understanding and defining the real nature of a war. In his brilliant analysis of imperialism, "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," Lenin pointed out that with the advance of imperialism there is increasing oppression of an ever-growing number of nations. At the same time he predicted the consequence of this, the intensification of the resistance of the nationally oppressed peoples. In "The Revolutionary Proletariat and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination," Lenin claimed that "the division of nations into oppressors and oppressed" must "form the central point of the Social-Democrat program, because this division constitutes *the very nature* of imperialism. . . ."

"This is precisely why the central point in the Social-Democratic program must be the distinction between oppressing and oppressed nations, which is the esence of imperialism." **

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* *The Communist International*, No. 7, 1938.

** V. I. Lenin, *Selected Works*, Vol. V, p. 284, International Publishers, New York.

In the article "On the Junius Pamphlet," Lenin showed what fateful consequences for the attitude of the working class to war were bound to ensue from the point of view that, under imperialism "there could be no more national wars."

"From it is derived the stupid propaganda for 'disarmament,' for the alleged reason that there cannot be any wars except reactionary ones; from it is derived the still more stupid and directly reactionary indifference to national movements. Such indifference becomes chauvinism when members of the European 'big' nations, *i.e.*, nations oppressing a mass of small and colonial peoples, declare with a would-be learned air: 'there can be no more national wars!' National wars *against* imperialist powers are not only possible and probable, they are inevitable and *progressive*, they are *revolutionary* although, of course, their *success* demands either the union of forces of a huge number of inhabitants of the oppressed countries . . . or a *specially* favorable combination of conditions of the international situation . . . or a *simultaneous* insurrection of the proletariat of one of the 'big' powers against the bourgeoisie. . . ."*

The senseless and criminal propaganda for "disarmament," which is now being carried on by Trotskyite agents of German fascism within the democratic countries and by "integral pacifists" within the workers' movement with such great energy, means the disarming of the working class and of the threatened nations in the face of those deadly enemies who are on the offensive; it means today direct support for the most reactionary powers and great harm to progress and the revolution. In the same way, the readiness, cloaked in a spate of "radical" speeches, of certain English and French Social-Democratic leaders, to hand over colonies to German and Italian fascism, is nothing other than open mockery of the right of self-determination of the colonial peoples, fighting for their freedom, who are treated by these "Socialists" as an object for barter and who must be "handed over" from one imperialist tyranny to a worse one.

Peace cannot be purchased by "handing over" peoples from the hitherto powerful imperialist Great Powers to servitude under the fascist powers, or by treating the annexation of smaller countries as "progressive, in the long run," or as unalterable, or as necessary action by which "worse had been prevented," as the Social-Democratic politicians did, one after another, with respect to the annexation of Austria, the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia, etc.

The post-war regime of peace which was destroyed by the fascist warmongers cannot be replaced by a regime, the "peaceful" stages of which mean nothing but preparations by the fascist aggressors for the next attacks. To the direct threat of numerous nations by the fascist powers, the nations can make effective answer only by carrying on the most determined struggle for the defense and the restoration of the freedom of the threatened and subjected peoples, and it is the task of the international working class to give to this front firm backbone and bold leadership.

Directly after the imperialist dictation of Munich, Georgi Dimitroff wrote the following concerning the prerequisites for a victorious struggle against the fascist warmongers:

"It would be difficult in post-war political history to find another such moment, as the present one, when the interests of the working class, peasantry, petty bourgeoisie and the intelligentsia, when the interests of the small nations, of the dependent and colonial countries, when the interests of culture and science, the interests of peace and democracy so coincided and merged in a common current against fascism, the worst enemy of mankind. *This is quite a real basis for the establishment of the united front of the working class and of the peoples of all countries against fascist barbarism and the incendiaries of imperialist war.*"*

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* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XIX, p. 184, Russian ed.

* Georgi Dimitroff, *After Munich*, p. 20, Workers Library Publishers, New York.

THE FUNDAMENTAL DIFFERENCE FROM THE SITUATION OF 1914

If fascism, the open terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist, most imperialist elements of finance capital, through its drive to suppress humanity by a triumvirate of fascist "Great Powers," has unintentionally brought about a common interest of the working class, of all progressive people and of all subjected and threatened nations to make common defense against the common enemy, and a common interest in its defeat, then, also, by the existence of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics the situation has been made entirely different from what it was before the first imperialist war in 1914.

In contrast to 1914, the world today is no longer ruled by imperialist Great Powers alone. A sixth of the world blossoms and flourishes under the prosperous rule of socialism and exercises a magnetic attraction on the oppressed and exploited of all countries. This sixth of the earth which has been removed from exploitation by imperialism, because of the unrestricted development of the creative powers of the peoples and nations who inhabit it, is becoming more and more a decisive political factor in the world, the existence and effect of which encourage progress and place obstacles in the way of the expansion drive of the imperialist powers. The existence of this mighty force distinguishes fundamentally the international situation of the present day from the situation and alignment of forces of 1914. In all imperialist states there are today large numbers of people whose sympathies and hopes are on the side of socialism which is no longer a vision of the future but which has become a reality in a mighty state. In the struggle of the oppressed and dependent countries for their independence and freedom, the fact that there is one power which, because of its principles and strength, has become a fortress of freedom, of the right of national self-determination and of social prosperity, means an enormous reinforcement.

Today this is understood by many Social-Democrats as well. Thus, the Geneva Socialist, Nicole, declares in *Travail*:

"The unity of the working world, and the support which the democratic countries of Western Europe are seeking from Soviet Russia are today the only anchors of safety for the liberties and democratic organizations of human society. Without that, we shall be witnesses of new fascist outrages on justice, the destruction of nations and the loss of their independence and freedom."

The principles of the foreign policy of the Socialist Soviet Union, laid down by Comrade Stalin at the Eighteenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.), are principles which express everything that the workers and the peoples fighting for their independence feel and wish. Stalin said:

"The foreign policy of the Soviet Union is clear and explicit:

"1. We stand for peace and the strengthening of business relations with all countries. That is our position; and we shall adhere to this position as long as these countries maintain like relations with the Soviet Union, and as long as they make no attempt to trespass on the interests of our country.

"2. We stand for peaceful, close and friendly relations with all the neighboring countries which have common frontiers with the U.S.S.R. That is our position; and we shall adhere to this position so long as these countries maintain like relations with the Soviet Union, and as long as they make no attempt to trespass, directly or indirectly, on the integrity and inviolability of the frontiers of the Soviet state.

"3. We stand for the support of nations which are the victims of aggression and are fighting for the independence of their country.

"4. We are not afraid of the threats of aggressors, and are ready to deal two blows for every blow delivered by instigators of war who attempt to violate the Soviet borders.

"Such is the foreign policy of the Soviet Union." *

* Joseph Stalin, *From Socialism to Communism in the Soviet Union*, pp. 16-17.

Every working class party which in reality, and not only in words, will stand up for the interests of the working class can adopt only an attitude of unmistakable agreement with these principles of a socialist foreign policy. But if "Socialist" politicians in the governments or parliaments of bourgeois-democratic states carry on a foreign policy against the Soviet Union and against maintaining those treaties made by bourgeois states with the Soviet Union, such activity can be only in the interests of the bourgeoisie, if not directly or indirectly in the interests of the fascist powers of the Berlin-Rome-Tokio war bloc.

Throughout its existence the Soviet Union has carried on an unmistakable peace policy. It stands outside the circle of those responsible for the faulty peace of the post-war era, while not a few Social-Democrat politicians who, during the imperialist World War, swam in the wake of their own bourgeoisie, have proved themselves, in the post-war era, too, to be apologists of the imperialist "peace system" or have become tools in the preparation of the German imperialist war of revenge. Without regard for all other existing ideological or political differences of opinion, there can and must be, within the ranks of those whose common interests are opposed to those of the fascist war bloc, a united and firm orientation on the Soviet Union.

The Soviet Union embodies those principles which alone can form the foundation of a real peace. The Soviet Union has pointed out tirelessly that it is impossible to ensure peace if weakly defended countries are abandoned to be devoured by the fascist warmongers, and it has emphasized over and over again that peace can only be ensured if at every point of their attack the fascist aggressors are opposed by the decisive superiority of the non-aggressive states, and if, at every point of their attack, they run up against the united resistance of all non-aggressive states.

The whole policy of the Soviet Union is aimed at preventing any further extension of the imperialist war. In spite of the deterioration of the international situation since the Munich betrayal it is still possible to avert the world war which threatens humanity, if the non-aggressive states, in the first place England and France, establish a real system of collective security and definitely refuse to encourage fascism to make new attacks by granting it new concessions. The Soviet Union, and the Soviet Union alone, has advocated, in a straightforward manner and without wavering, a practical peace policy. It is in the primary interests of the nations and, above all, of the international working class to support energetically this peace policy of the Soviet Union and frustrate the peace-destroying intrigues of the reactionary bourgeoisie in all countries. It is in their primary interests not to permit the smallest concession to the fascist dictators but in every possible way to come to the help of the nations oppressed by fascism—the Spaniards, the Czechs, the Austrians, as well as the German and Italian anti-fascists, in their struggle against the fascist dictatorship.

As, at the present time, the chief problem is the defense of national self-rule and the defense of the countries and nations threatened by the fascist aggressors, on the solution of which depends the prevention of any further extension of the imperialist war which is now being waged, so the permanence and genuineness of peace will later also depend on the restoration and ensurance of the freedom and independenc of *all* nations.

NO PEACE WITH THE REACTIONARY BOURGEOISIE

What is the attitude, in this situation, of the representatives of the bourgeoisie who have power in the democratic countries? What attitude is to be expected of them after they have tried over and over again to encourage the fascist aggressors by concessions and to direct their expansion drive against the Soviet Union and against unprotected smaller states?

The settlement which Chamberlain and

Daladier arranged in Munich has not worked out as they anticipated. The "canalization" of fascist expansion was unsuccessful, as was the attempt, by stabbing the republic, to win Spain as a strategic position for English imperialism. Will those men, who until now are primarily responsible for the extension of the imperialist war and for the conquests of the fascist war bloc, take a new path, will they turn to building a dam against the fascist torrent and if necessary repulse the fascist warmongers by force?

The working class and all honest friends of peace, who in the past have had such unmistakable experience with the reactionary attitude of the English and French bourgeoisie, have no reason to accept as honest coinage the maneuvers of English and French statesmen, which maneuvers are only intended to serve the purpose of soothing mass dissatisfaction with the policy of giving way to the aggressors. The duty of the working class is greater vigilance and the keenest mistrust. As soon as the opportunity seems favorable to them, the reactionary representatives of the bourgeoisie will try again and again to get others to pull the chestnuts out of the fire for them. They will make fresh attempts to come to an "understanding" with the fascist rulers. And, finally, when by their own fault there is no choice left to them but to fight, they will try to prevent such a war resulting in the liberation of the oppressed nations and classes.

The working class and all progressive people who are ready to oppose fascist invasion will have to see to it that these reactionary forces do not, by fresh concessions to the fascist powers, leave the way open to world war. These reactionary forces attempt to satisfy the fascist dictators at the expense of the oppressed nations and classes and of the weak and poorly protected. In the background of this policy is world war which will inevitably break out as soon as fascism has devoured all the smaller nations and feels strong enough to pass on to direct assault on the greater ones, against England and France. In this event, the reactionary forces will try to continue their policy in such a war also and pursue by force of arms their goal of bringing on new complications and contradictions through a system of national tryanny and suppression of the working class.

It lies within the power of the working class and its allied forces to prevent that. It is within their power to prevent the reactionary bourgeoisie from encouraging fascism by new concessions and reinforcements at the expense of others, to let loose world war. It is within their power to prevent the peoples from slipping into such a war as the prisoners of reaction. The prerequisite to this is admittedly that they preserve their independence and take care that, through the policy of Social-Democrat leaders who hitherto have stood in the way of the unity of the working class, they are not turned into hangers on of the bourgeoisie and thus handed over to the power of the reactionary imperialist cliques.

The working class and the progressives are a force, opposed to the fascist warmongers, which can and will conquer if it frees itself from the fetters of so-called "pacifist" ideology which at the present time is pro-fascist in its activity, if it appropriates the teachings of the Party of Lenin and Stalin and if it prevents capitulators and reactionaries in bourgeois-democratic countries from working on behalf of fascist reaction.

Today one cannot talk about war and peace "in general terms." Today a great part of humanity has already been dragged into bloody war and the fascist allies are crouching for a spring on new prey. Today for Spain and China, tomorrow perhaps for other countries. The problem formulated by Lenin in the following sentences remains concrete and inevitable:

"Wars are the continuation of policy; consequently, once a struggle for democracy takes place, a war for democracy is also *possible*; the self-determination of nations is only one of the democratic demands and is not to be distinguished

in principle from the others. 'World domination' is, to put it briefly, the content of imperialist policy, the continuation of which is imperialist war. To deny 'defense of the fatherland,' *i.e.*, participation in a democratic war, is a stupidity that has nothing in common with Marxism." *

* V. I. Lenin, *Collected Works*, Vol. XIX, p. 20. Russian ed.

If this truth, molded by Lenin on the basis of the teachings of Marx and Engels, became the common possession of the deciding masses of the international proletariat, it could then be made impossible for the fascist warmongers to carry out their plans of robbery against a front including whole nations, and the working class and great masses of wage-earners in all nations.

"The imperialist claims of the fascist vultures are encountering the resistance of certain capitalist states and a large section of the ruling classes of those countries whose governments are capitulating to the fascist aggressors. The United States, *the biggest capitalist* power in the world, anxious to defend its interests in the Latin American countries from Germany, Italy and Japan—which are straining toward and rapidly penetrating these countries—and its positions in the Philippines, China and the Pacific from Japan, is working for a bloc with the South American states to resist fascist expansion. The United States is thereby stimulating resistance to the aggressive plans of the fascists in other parts of the world, including Europe."—D. Z. Manuilsky, *The World Communist Movement*, pp. 13-14.

The "Principle of Order" in the Danube Basin

SOME LESSONS FROM THE HISTORY OF THE DANUBE PEOPLES

BY P. WIEDEN

AFTER the enslavement of Austria and Czechoslovakia the German fascists try to give their rape of nations the color of "historical justice." Official Prussian history always has been a falsification of history, but the Hitler German twisting of history surpasses anything ever done in this direction.

The Nazi history fakers received instructions to spread the following assertions in a "scientific" and authoritative manner.

1. Hitler Germany is the "legal successor" of that "Holy Roman Empire" which finally collapsed in the Thirty Years War to drag on a shadowy existence like a specter in a ruined castle for nearly two hundred years and finally to vanish into nothing at the word of Napoleon.

2. The German Reich has for a thousand years been the "Principle of Order" in Central Europe, the bond holding together the peoples of the Danube Basin.

3. Austrians, Czechs, Slovaks, South Slavs and Hungarians have no history of their own and depend in every respect on the German "protectorate."

From these rash assertions the Nazi history fakers draw the conclusion that German fascism, in enslaving all the nations of Central Europe, is only fulfilling its "historical mission"; that these nations have always been subject to Germany and that the foreign rule of Germany is not only their inevitable destiny but represents also their prime interests.

In order to examine these lying assertions we shall recall, in brief, the history of those peoples regarded by German fascism as its protegés. We shall try to give a few important lessons from these thousand years of history. And finally we shall see how far it is possible from these lessons to gain points of vantage for the fight for freedom of the enslaved nations against German fascism.

THE SLAVS

Through the countries of the Danube Basin, opened wide toward the east, streamed many peoples. The result was a colorful mixture of peoples, the common settlement and intermarriage of many nationalities. In the fifth century of our era the Celts invaded the country and mingled with the original Japhetic inhabitants which centuries before had already developed a high degree of culture.

At the beginning of our era, the Romans added the Danube countries to their empire; the Germanic nomad peoples of the Markomans and Quadians made a temporary conquest of the Bohemian and Moravian regions. After the storms of the migration of peoples, in the sixth century, the Slavs settled in Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia, Hungary, Austria and Jugoslavia. They came into conflict with the Germanic Bajuwars who conquered Tyrol and parts of Austria. The freedom-loving Slavonic peasants defended themselves against the Bajuwar adventurers but at the same time they were attacked by the Mongol

Avar horsemen, surging out of the East, and had to defend their freedom on two sides.

This struggle on two fronts remained for centuries the most urgent problem of those peoples who settled in Bohemia and Moravia. They were the shield of Europe against the onslaught of the Mongolian tribes and at the same time they had to resist the invasion of the Germans who won land sooner with the sword than with the plow. Already in the tenth century, the historian of the German emperors, the Saxon Widukind, described the Slav peasants' fight for freedom in the words: "Prizing their dear freedom beyond everything, they ever rise again in arms in spite of many defeats. While the Saxons fight for glory and the extension of their borders, the Slavs struggle for their freedom."

The Slavonic peoples in Central Europe were defeated by the Avars but in 623 they rose again in arms and broke the yoke of alien rule. Led by one, Samo, whom the old historians described as a Frankish merchant, they undertook the first great attempt to guarantee the freedom of the Slav peoples from the Moldau to the Save by a union of states. They formed a state which included the present day Bohemia, Moravia, Austria, Hungary, Slovenia and Croatia. Because of undeveloped conditions of production, such a large state could not exist in those days and after the death of Samo it disintegrated into a Northern Reich including Bohemia, Moravia and a few contiguous regions, and a Southern Reich, Carinthia, which included Carinthia, Steiermark, Eastern Tyrol and parts of lower Austria and Salzburg.

In the eighth century arose the mighty Carolingian Empire in Europe, spreading out on all sides, which, with the help of the Catholic Church, undertook the gigantic task of restoring the Roman Empire on a new foundation. This attempt could meet with but passing success in the epoch of early feudalism. Soon after the death of Charlemagne, the Carolingian Empire collapsed. None the less the German feudal lords were able, in this period, to establish their rule over Slavonic Austria. The peasants in Upper and Lower Austria, in Styria and in Carinthia retained their Slavonic mother tongue for centuries but German was spoken in castle and cloister. The German sword and the German cross ruled over the Slavonic plow. Even in the fourteenth century the majority of the Austrian people spoke their Slavonic native speech. Even in Vienna in the fourteenth century, as was established by the chronicler Durandi in his work *Rationale Divinorum Offiziorum*, was "no other language so widespread as this which is called Wendish." It was only by degrees that German became the language of the Austrian people.

In spite of the advance of the Carolingian Empire and the common struggle of the Slavs and the Germans against the still threatening Avars, the Moravian kingdom not only knew how to defend its independence, but also, under the Moimorid dynasty, was able vigorously to advance. After the division of the empire of Charlemagne, in 843, the Greater Moravian Kingdom became a notable power factor in Central Europe. Again and again the German attacks were hurled back, the Great Moravian Kingdom gave more and more definite assurance of Slavonic independence —until an unforeseen catastrophe befell Central Europe.

THE HUNGARIANS

In 889, the Finnish-Ugrian people of the Magyars were driven out by the Petschenegs from the coast of the Black Sea. Searching for new grazing grounds, the Magyars journeyed westward. Bloodily defeated by the Bulgars, who, under the leadership of Symeon of the Strong Hand, defended their culturally and economically prosperous state, they invaded the plain between the Theiss and the Danube and drove like a wedge between the Slavs of the North and those of the South, between the Kingdom of Greater Moravia and rising Croatia. This invasion of Central Europe by the

Magyars was of dire importance. A German historian commented on this role of the Magyars as a wedge between the North and South Slavs in the words: "They have fulfilled this, from the Germanic point of view, very important task, for a thousand years and they still do today."

In 906, the Magyar horsemen of the steppes destroyed the Kingdom of Greater Moravia, which was not strong enough to resist at the same time the pressure of Germany and the impact of Hungary. The swarms of Magyar horsemen careered now throughout Europe, through Italy, Germany, France, Spain and the Balkans, seeking a home. The united Germans and Slavs were able to stop them for the first time in 955.

Extremely complicated conditions had arisen in the Danube Basin as a result of the influx of the Hungarians into Central Europe and the subsequent disintegration of the area of Slav settlement, and as a result of the rule of the German feudal lords in Austria. In these regions the most divergent nationalities were and are boxed up with one another and dependent on one another. The process of unification, begun by the Kingdom of Samo and the Kingdom of Greater Moravia, was interrupted by force and it needed the greatest of shocks to hammer into the peoples of the Moldau and the Danube the realization that they belong together and that only together are they in a condition to preserve their independence.

THE PRZEMYSL STATE

After the destruction of the Kingdom of Greater Moravia, the Czech Counts of Bohemia came into the foreground. Threatened on one side by the Germans and on the other by the Magyars, the Czech people were able, only by great caution and endurance, to preserve their independence. When the German Emperor Henry I appeared with his army before Prague, in 928, Wenzel I was obliged to recognize his suzerainty. Under his successor, Boleslav, the Czechs rose in arms against the German Emperor Otto I. After a stubborn struggle for freedom they were obliged to submit, more especially because the Magyar squadrons were disturbing the country. In the decisive battle of Lechfeld, fought in 955 against the Magyars, the Czechs fought side by side with the Germans. After a heavy defeat the Hungarians settled down. They adopted Christianity and side by side with their cult of the "Great Woman," the mother of the gods, appeared the cult of the "Little Woman," the cult of the Virgin Mary. In the year 1000, Stephen I received a royal crown from the Pope. The Hungarian kings allied by marriage with the German emperors and revelled in German feudalism.

The German emperors were in no wise the embodiment of the legendary "Principle of Order" in the further formation of national and state connections in the Danube Basin. On the contrary, they were always striving to prevent the union of the peoples on the Moldau and the Danube, to play off one nation against another and to act with all methods against the growth of a large organized state. They encouraged feudal division, sought to frustrate the union between Bohemia and Moravia, planned by the powerful ruling dynasty of the Przemyslids, and to stir up discord between Poland and Bohemia. In spite of all these obstacles, the Przemyslids were able to unite Bohemia and Moravia, to prevent the interference of Poland, to subdue the feudal nobility and to establish a regulated succession.

From the beginning of the thirteenth century the Przemyslids were the mightiest Central European ruling dynasty and Bohemia was the richest, best ordered and most progressive country in Central Europe. The feudal lordship of the German emperor became a pure formality; in practice, Bohemia and Moravia were an independent state. Its superior importance is indicated also by the fact that in 1204 the Dukes of Bohemia attained the rank of hereditary kingship while the German kings were elected kings only. In contrast to Germany, where the feudal nobility were becoming more and more their own masters, in

Bohemia there took place a development similar to that of France; in the struggle against the feudal nobility the Bohemian crown, like the French, depended more and more on the citizens and in part even on the peasants.

This development reached its height under the great king Ottocar Przemysl II. German citizens, craftsmen and miners were happy to follow his summons and settle in rich, well-ordered Bohemia in order to escape the feudal disorder of Germany. It is one of the many legends of German imperialism that Bohemia owed its rise to the German immigrants; the truth is that Czechs and Germans in brotherly community of labor raised the Przemysl state to a high level of culture.

In 1241 the Mongol storm broke over Central Europe. Poland was overrun and again the peoples of Europe were threatened by the danger of coming under the hoofs of the horses of the steppes. It was the Slavonic Silesians who flung themselves against the wild invaders. It is true that they were defeated and annihilated at Liegnitz, but Central Europe was saved. The Mongolians turned toward Hungary and two years later the bloody interlude was ended.

THE KINGDOM OF OTTOCAR PRZEMYSL II

In 1246 the last Duke of Austria of the Papenberg dynasty fell in battle against the kings of Hungary. At the same time there died out the Hohenstaufen, from which dynasty, for a century, had sprung the German emperors. Bavaria, Hungary and Bohemia fought for the succession in Austria. The king of Bohemia, Ottocar Przemysl II, defeated the Bavarians and Hungarians and united Bohemia, Moravia, Austria, Styria, Carinthia, Carniola and the coast lands in one great empire. The feudal nobility were repressed, towns were able to develop themselves in freedom, agriculture and mining, craftsmanship and trade flourished under the strong kingdom of the Przemyslids.

For twenty-five years the united peoples, led by Bohemia, experienced a hitherto unexampled rise in culture—until Rudolf von Habsburg, elected German emperor in 1273, at the head of the German nobility, attacked Ottocar. The Austrian and Bohemian feudal lords went over to Rudolf and their treachery was fatal to Ottocar and the people of the Danube basin. After the defeat and murder of the Bohemian king, Rudolf von Habsburg gave the feudal nobility power over citizens and peasants and thus encouraged the principle of ruin and disorder in the countries which he appropriated. The results of the unbridled rule of the nobility, which he conjured up, were soon shown in the incipient impoverishment of the peasantry, in the decline of agriculture, the desolation of settlements, the wild feudal wars which shook each country and undermined their power of resistance to the ever-approaching Turkish peril, and finally in the revolutionary struggles against the feudal lords, beginning with the Swiss fight for freedom, rising to the Hussite wars and reaching their climax in the great Peasants' War from the plains of Hungary to the Vosges. In Hungary the fatal feudal rule was imposed by kings of the House of Anjou, a feudal rule on the shoulders of which lies, in history, an immeasurable burden of guilt.

RULE OF THE NOBILITY AND THE TURKISH DANGER

Ottocar's attempt to unite the peoples from the Moldau as far as the Adriatic, in the struggle against the rule of the nobility, was shattered. But each time national forces forced back the feudal nobility, in Bohemia, in Austria, in Hungary, this attempt was renewed. Not the German emperor, not the "Holy Roman Empire," not the feudal German "colonists," but the democratic national forces were the "Principle of Order" in the countries of the Danube basin. Only when these national forces suffered a fearful defeat in the great Peasants' Rebellion of the sixteenth century did the Habsburgs undertake the task of bringing about the necessary union of Bohemian, Austrian and Hungarian

countries—a task which they fulfilled badly enough.

The union of these countries became an elementary necessity when the Turks, more and more threatening, made the attempt to establish their alien rule, not only over Southern Europe but also over Central Europe. This historical truth, overlooked by the bourgeois historians, was established in a supremely telling way by Comrade Stalin. On March 10, 1921, in his report on the national question, delivered to the Tenth Congress of the C.P.S.U.(B.), Comrade Stalin said:

"In the West—in Great Britain, France, Italy, and partly in Germany—the period of the break-up of feudalism and the formation of people into nations on the whole coincided in time with the period which saw the appearance of the centralized states, and as a result the nations in their development became invested in state forms. . . . In Eastern Europe, on the contrary, the process of formation of nationalities and the elimination of feudal disunity did not coincide in time with the process of formation of centralized states. I am referring to Hungary, Austria and Russia. In these countries capitalist development had not yet begun; it was perhaps only incipient; but the necessity of taking defensive measures against the invasions of the Turks, Mongols and other Oriental peoples demanded that centralized states capable of withstanding the onslaught of the invaders should be formed without delay. And since in Eastern Europe the process of formation of centralized states proceeded more rapidly than the process of formation of people into nations, mixed states arose, each made up of several nationalities which had not yet formed themselves into nations but which were already united in a common state." *

In 1360 the Turkish armies led by Murad I crossed the Hellespont which separates Europe from Asia Minor. The Slavonic Balkan peoples defended Europe with the greatest heroism. While the German feudal lords ruined Central Europe with their pitiful feuds, a battle famous in world history was fought in Serbia. The bold Serbian peasantry which had united as a state in the twelfth century, had risen in the fourteenth century to a high degree of culture, led by the national hero Stephan Duschan. When, in 1389, they opposed the Turkish conquerors with arms, they defended a state in which the welfare of peasant and citizen was far advanced.

The battle at the field of Kossovo (Amselfeld) ended in an annihilating defeat for the freedom-loving Serbs. Again, as a hundred and fifty years before, a Slavonic people had protected Europe with its body and its life. This people, too, in its defeat, won legendary fame, in contrast to the feudal lords of Central Europe whose battles against the Turks ended ignominiously. A few years later, in 1396, the undisciplined army of nobles of the Hungarian King Sigismund, who later, as German emperor, caused the Hussite wars by the cowardly murder of John Huss, fled in disorder under the onslaught of the Turks at Nicopoli. The Balkan peoples fell under the alien rule of Turkish despotism, which, like German imperialism, regarded its centralistic regime which demanded unconditional obedience and killed every movement towards freedom as the only "Principle of Order."

THE PEOPLES PROTECT THEMSELVES

Once again the Turkish peril was turned aside from Central Europe—not by European "Crusaders" but by the mighty Mongolian conqueror Timur who destroyed the Turkish forces in Asia Minor and brought the Turkish Empire to the verge of destruction. In the breathing space this afforded, the disintegration of the Danube countries grew, owing to the increase in feudal anarchy and to the policy of the Emperor from the House of Luxemburg and of the Princes of the House of Hapsburg. In Bohemia the Hussites rose against the intolerable social conditions and the foreign rule of the German

* Joseph Stalin, *Marxism and the National and Colonial Question*, pp. 99-100. International Publishers, New York.

feudal lords, temporal and spiritual, driving the hirelings of German feudalism like chaff before them and everywhere gaining the sympathy of peasants and craftsmen. When, after the conquest of Constantinople in 1453, the Turks again surged against Central Europe, the popular forces in Bohemia, Moravia and Hungary were able for the time being to repress the feudal rule and thus make possible a really effective defense of the threatened countries.

The reign of the Hussite national king George von Podiegrad, in Bohemia, and the placing in power of national heroes from the family of Hunyadi in Hungary, opened up new perspectives for the distracted countries. While the German princes did not lift a finger to defend Central Europe against the Turks a people's army, in which were united peasants and craftsmen from Poland, Bohemia and Hungary, gained in 1443 a notable victory over the Turkish aggressor. While the German, Austrian and Hungarian feudal lords took only their internal disputes seriously, and while the German Emperor Frederick III and the Austrian Prince Ladislaus, both of the House of Hapsburg, struggled furiously against each other an ill-armed army of peasants made up of Hungarians, Czechs, Poles, Austrians and South Slavs inflicted a decisive defeat on the Turkish aggressor in 1456, at Belgrade.

While the Emperor Frederick III, in the words of an old chronicler, "cared more to protect his plants from frost than his people from the enemy," twenty thousand citizens and peasants rose up in arms in Carinthia and Carniola and hurled the Turks from out the country with their own hand.

Jonas Hunyadi, the victor of Belgrade, died directly after the memorable battle of the peasants against the hordes of Turkish Janizaries. As gratitude for the saving of Hungary and Austria, the Hapsburg Ladislaus had one of Hunyadi's two sons executed and imprisoned the other. The feudal lords, whose tool Ladislaus was, hoped in this manner to relieve themselves of their popular opponents. Mathias Hunyadi, however, was able to escape from prison and gather the people around him. In 1458 he was chosen king of Hungary, overthrew the feudal lords, chased the Emperor Frederick III out of Austria and united the Austrian and Hungarian nations. He also won Moravia and Silesia and thus opposed a great empire against the Turks. He organized a standing army for the defense of the nations, encouraged humanism and held the Turks in check on the frontiers.

THE PEASANTS' WAR AND THE TURKISH WAR

After the death of the people's king, Mathias Hunyadi, in 1490 (George von Podiebrad had already died in 1471), the nobility again raised its head. It is true that the Polish kings of the Jagellon Dynasty united Poland, Bohemia and Hungary under their rule but they did not know how to subdue the feudal nobility and make the cause of the citizens and peasants their own cause. Against the increasingly threatening attacks of the Turks they assembled, in Hungary in 1514, an army of 60,000 Hungarian, Austrian and South Slavonic peasants. The feudal lords were extremely displeased at this and wanted to drag back "their" peasants into serfdom, by force. The exploitation of serfs was more important to them than the defense of the country against the Turkish invaders. In the struggle against this feudal pretension, the peasants' army became a revolutionary army.

At the same time the Slovene and German-speaking peasants in Carinthia, Carniola and Styria rebelled against the noble oppressors of peasants. The outcome of the Peasants' Revolution was bound to decide also the outcome of the Turkish wars. Nobles and princes had proved themselves incapable of protecting the threatened countries; only the united Slavonic, Hungarian and Austrian peasants and citizens were in a condition to repulse the Turkish invaders. German imperial circles did not concern

themselves with the Turkish peril. They were occupied exclusively with the disorders of the Reformation. The Catholic princes saw the Protestants as their chief foe and Luther declared that Turks were more acceptable to him than Catholics. The peoples of the Danube had nothing to expect from Germany. For good or ill, they had to combine to save themselves. The victory of the Peasants' Revolution would have been the best guarantee for this coalition of peoples.

The Hungarian peasants, after a series of notable successes, were defeated and massacred. In 1515 the same fate was suffered by the Slovenian and Austrian peasants of Carniola, Carinthia and Styria who paid with a bloody defeat for their trust in the promises of the Emperor Maximilian I. In 1525 the peasants in South Germany, Austria and the Slovenian regions rebelled. While the German peasants were defeated, the Austrian and Slovenian peasants, led by the brilliant Michael Geismayer, won victory after victory. The wily Hapsburger Ferdinand I negotiated with them, perceived in them an offset to the power of the over-bold feudal lords but ultimately was not strong or clever enough to build a strong state with the people's help. He betrayed the peasants, took sides finally with the nobility and raised an army of German mercenaries to overthrow the people's revolution. The feudal lords also conquered in Austria, though not so conclusively as in Germany.

The victory of the feudal counter-revolution in 1526 was at the same time a defeat for Europe. The feudal army which fought the Turks at Mohacz suffered a defeat not only annihilating but also shameful. Hungary paid for the counter revolution with centuries of alien rule, Austria was able only with great effort to avoid the same fate.

THE HAPSBURG STATE

The union of the Danube peoples by the strength of the people themselves had become illusory at the collapse of the great Peasants' Revolution. The necessary union could now only succeed "from above"—from the Hapsburgs. The Hapsburg state arose in the defensive war of the nations against the Turkish invaders.

In itself, this state was a historical necessity. It is stupid perversion of history to explain the origin of this state only by "dynastic policy" and "the arbitrary behavior of princes." The dynastic policy of the Hapsburgs is indisputable and their "noble arbitrariness" is not less. But it is not possible to hold a great state together for centuries only by dynastic policy and arbitrary rule. The cement of the Hapsburg state was not the ruling house but the common destiny of the Danube peoples. The Austro-Hungarian state was able to exist for centuries not *because* of the policy of the Hapsburgs but *in spite* of it.

With a few famous exceptions, the Hapsburgs always supported the forces of counter-revolution against the forces of the people. They did not buttress the state of which they were the rulers on an alliance with the citizens and peasants, but saw the principle of their state in an alliance with the nobility and with the Church. After the conclusion of a shameful treaty with the Turks, Ferdinand I, at the "Bloody Reichstag" in Prague, impressed the hereditary royal power of the Hapsburgs on the consciousness of the Czech people with the sword of the executioner. Rudolf II and Ferdinand II earned the ineradicable hate of the Czech people by the horrors of the counter-reformation and the dreadful massacre of 1620.

By maltreatment and persecution which reached their horrid climax in 1687 in the massacre of Eperies the Hungarian people were driven again and again into the arms of the Hungarian nobility who defended feudal anarchy against despotic centralism. Doubtless centralism and hereditary kingship stood for historical progress against feudal anarchy but in the hands of the Hapsburgs it was so much bound up with reaction and barbarism that it was able only to repel the people.

The close union of the Czechs, Aus-

trians and Hungarians was a historical necessity—but the Hapsburgs gave it a loathsome aspect. The union of these nations, under the social conditions of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, could only take the form of hereditary monarchy—but this hereditary monarchy could base itself just as well on popular forces as on forces inimical to the people. With a few exceptions it depended on the power of the people's enemies, to its own detriment. As a result of this union it was possible to repel the Turks from the Balkans and to free the Hungarians and Croats from their alien rule and the Austrians from continual oppression from without—but the resulting internal oppression made this liberation somewhat problematical and it was not the worst of the Hungarians who conspired with the Turks against the Hapsburgs. The historically necessary union was dearly bought and all too often acted against the people in the form of intolerable oppression.

In spite of all this, it is not possible to dispute either the independent existence of the Hapsburg state since the sixteenth century, nor its historical necessity. The Nazi perverters of history want to forget that the "Holy Roman Empire" disintegrated in the struggles of the Reformation period, to decline finally in the Thirty Years War. After the union with the countries of the Czechs and Hungarians, Austria developed independently. The Hapsburg state was a reality, the "Holy Roman Empire" a fiction. The complete state sovereignty of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy was furthermore legally guaranteed by the internationally recognized determination of the succession in the "Pragmatic Sanction" of the Hapsburg Charles VI in 1720. Politically, economically and culturally it was of much earlier origin.

NATIONAL STATE AND NATIONAL PRISON

The Austro-Hungarian national state which had emerged in the struggle against the Turks was consolidated in the struggle against the Prussians. When, in 1740, after the death of her father, Charles VI, the young Maria Theresa mounted the throne, Austria-Hungary was very nearly shattered by the allied Prussians, Bavarians and French. In this appalling crisis, the living strength of the national state was put to the test. Frederick of Prussia had invaded Silesia without any declaration of war, cynically proclaiming this violation as his right. His French and Bavarian allies occupied Bohemia and great parts of Austria. Maria Theresa seemed lost. At this decisive moment, the peoples came into action. The war against the Prussian invaders was a national war like the war against the Turkish invaders. Austrians, Hungarians and Slavs united closely to defend their common state. Their intervention saved the state and gave new strength to the alliance of its peoples.

And once again, in further developments, it was the short-sighted policy of the Hapsburgs which undermined the state and estranged the peoples from each other. Supported by the great feudal landlords, the Catholic Church and an alien bureaucracy, the Hapsburgers blindly opposed the awakening, the democratic and national movements, of the peoples in the nineteenth century. During the period of expanding capitalism, the Slavonic peoples began to demand national equality. The German-speaking Austrian bourgeoisie and the Hungarian nobles furiously opposed the demands of the Slavs, headed by the Czechs. The Hapsburgs and their advisers attempted to play off the nations against each other and to keep down the democratic movements of the nations with the help of the great Austrian, Hungarian and Slavonic landowners. The nationalist struggles were more and more embittered by the obstinate intolerance of the ruling circles of the German-speaking Austrian bourgeoisie and the Hungarian magnates and by the stupid policy of "muddling on" to which the Hapsburgs gave their exalted approval. All nationalities began more and more to regard the people's state as the people's prison and the Hapsburgs as chief jailers.

In spite of growing national contradictions neither the Austrians nor the Slavs, nor the Hungarians desired the destruction of their common state. However much they abominated the apparatus of the national oppressors, they felt all the same, in the face of German imperialism, rising under the leadership of Prussia, the necessity of living together in a common state which admittedly, in the long run, could not be a centralized but only a federal state. Only after the collapse of all efforts and aspirations tending in this direction, only when the Danube monarchy marched at the side of Germany into the imperialist war, only when it became clear that a victory for the "Central Powers" would have no result other than the unlimited rule of German imperialism over Central and Southeastern Europe, did the Slavonic peoples see their way out in the destruction of the Hapsburg state.

THE WORKING CLASS AND THE NATIONAL QUESTION

In all these national struggles it was the historic task of the working class to be the cement holding together the nations. It remains the great guilt of Austrian, Hungarian and Czech Social-Democracy that it did not devote itself with revolutionary determination to the fulfilment of this historic task. It approached the national question, not in the spirit of revolutionary proletarian internationalism but in the spirit of petty-bourgeois nationalist limitation, in the tow of the nationalist bourgeoisie. It thus caused a national split, not only of the party but also of the trade unions and drove the workers into the camp of "their national bourgeoisie.

Only a truly revolutionary party would have been able to preserve the unity of the Austrian, Hungarian and Slav workers and thus prepare the way for the unity of the nations also. A truly revolutionary party would have demanded the right of the nations to self-determination to the extent of state separation, at the same time uniting the Austrian, Hungarian and Slav workers in a single united party and calling for the voluntary union of peoples for the defense of their national independence against all imperialist threats.

The watchword of a revolutionary party of the working class should have been against the Hapsburgs and for the voluntary union of the small nations of Central Europe. Only the revolutionary internationalism of the working class could have brought about the historical solution of the national question. Only the struggle of the working class for the defeat of the Hapsburg monarchy and of German imperialism, in the Great War, could have prevented the workers of all nationalities from being brought under the leadership of "their" national bourgeoisie. The policy of Austria, Hungarian and Czech Social-Democracy nevertheless encouraged the destruction of the historical union of the nations and ultimately worked to the advantage of German imperialism.

After the collapse of the Hapsburg monarchy in 1918 the working class of the newly formed states did not fight for a common proletarian conception of fraternal cooperation of the nations of the Danube Basin. In all countries the Social-Democratic leaders were the accomplices of the national bourgeoisie. In Austria they demanded "union" with Germany. In so doing they made demagogic references to Marx and Engels who had fought for Greater Germany as a revolutionary solution under completely different circumstances. In Czechoslovakia the leaders of the Czech as well as of the German-Bohemian Social-Democrats stood in the camp of "their" national bourgeoisie and carried the fratricidal struggle into the ranks of the working class. The Hungarian revolution was betrayed by the Social-Democratic leaders and Hungary became a center of counter-revolution. In all countries the narrow-minded fatal nationalism of the bourgeoisie triumphed, an element of decay and disintegration as once the feudal lordship had been. And just as feudal anarchy undermined in olden times the power of resistance

of the Danube peoples against Turkish despotism, so the stupid and treacherous nationalism of the bourgeoisie undermined the power of resistance of the Danube peoples to German imperialism.

The unifying element, the "Principle of Order" in the Danube Basin was always the democratic forces of the peoples. The reactionary classes always were the element of decay and disintegration. In the defensive struggle against the feudal lords of the "Holy Roman Empire" and against Turkish despotism it was the citizens and peasants of the Middle Ages who ensured the independence of the peoples of the Danube Basin and it was the great feudal landowners who sacrificed the independence of the peoples in their own filthy class interests.

Today, German fascism has taken over the role of Turkish despotism. Today the reactionary bourgeoisie embodies the shameful traditions of the old feudal nobility. Today the working class must take over the proud traditions of the peoples who heroically resisted the alien rule of the Turks and the treachery of reaction.

AGAINST THE FOREIGN RULE OF FASCISM—THE UNION OF THE DANUBE PEOPLES

"We chased the Turks away—we will chase the Prussians away too!" The people of Vienna coined this saying. The peoples remember their great history. The flame of historical truth destroys the fascist perversions of history.

It is not true that the "Holy Roman Empire," to which the fascists appeal, united the nations of Central Europe economically, politically and culturally. From the beginning the Czechs, like the Italians, the Swish like the Frieslander and the Lithuanians like the Slovenes carried on a stubborn fight for freedom against the German emperor and feudal lords. The German emperor and the feudal lords were able only temporarily to exercise suzerainty over most of these peoples. In the Thirty Years War the "Holy Roman Empire" finally collapsed and the Austrians, Czechs, Slovaks, Hungarians, Slovenes and Croats formed their own state. From 1648 onwards, the "Holy Roman Empire" was a ghost having no real existence.

It is not true that the Reich of the Germans has been the "Principle of Order" in Central Europe for a thousand years. In the first half of the Middle Ages this Reich only brought disorder and unrest to the areas of Slav settlement, in the second half of the Middle Ages it was so torn inwardly by disorders of the nobility and by civil war that it left the protection of Europe against the Turks to the peoples of the Danube Basin. We have called to mind, in a short historical survey, the struggles of these peoples for freedom against Turkish despotism and against the reactionary rule of the nobles. We have seen that not the Emperor and the feudal lords but the democratic forces of the peoples were the "Principle of Order" in the Danube Basin.

It is not true that the Austrians, the Hungarians and the Slavs can look back on no history of their own. Their thousand years of national history is rich in great memories and achievements, fights for freedom and monuments of culture.

This history will be a weapon against the foreign rule of German fascism. It makes the peoples of the Danube Basin conscious of the fact that they belong together. It makes them conscious of the fact that they were enslaved because they were disunited and that they will be able to shake off the yoke if they unite in a fraternal bond of struggle. It makes them conscious of the fact that neither the Czechs nor the Slovaks, neither the Austrians nor the Hungarians are strong enough by themselves to ensure their national independence and that only an alliance of these nations, in which no nation claims to dominate will be strong enough to prevent any national oppression. In the struggle against the foreign domination of the fascists the peoples of the Danube Basin will unite and continue to protect this unity as a precious possession.

In 1427 the peoples of Transylvania, the Hungarians, the Szekler and the Saxons, faced with threatened domination by the Turks, swore solemnly to one another "mutually to protect each other against each and everyone who might attack them," and bound themselves to come straightway to the help of the one attacked by summoning all able-bodied men. In this spirit, the peoples of the Danube Basin will finally overcome that German fascism which seeks to incite them against each other in order to enslave them one by one, they will win their freedom again and preserve it lastingly.

"The moribund capitalist world will not save itself by a counter-revolutionary war on the Soviet Union, but will only hasten its own destruction. The armed resistance of the great Soviet people will stir up the whole world of labor, all those whose right to liberty, work, a better life and an independent country has been trampled underfoot by fascism. It will rouse proletarians and working people in all corners of the globe, who will realize that the hour of retribution for their centuries of suffering is at hand.

"It will let loose throughout the world a mighty movement of anti-fascist forces, heartened by the tremendous power of resistance offered by the Soviet people to fascism.—D. Z. Manuilsky, *The World Communist Movement*, p. 55.

Fifteen Years Since the Murder of Matteotti

BY F. LANG

FIFTEEN years ago on June 10, 1924, the Italian Socialist deputy, Giacomo Matteotti, was murdered by the fascists. This murder made people shrink with abhorrence, and roused them against fascism. It became clear at once to the downtrodden people of Italy, to the international working class and the progressive people throughout the world, that with the seizure of power by fascism, the saloon became the seat of government, the dagger became the instrument of government policy, and murder the program of the rulers. The outcry of the people, the instability of the fascist ruling circles, the readiness to bargain, especially noticeable in the factories, and the continued falling off of followers, were signs of a deep crisis of Italian fascism. It would have been possible to wipe fascism off the surface of the earth by a daring mobilization of the working class and the common people in general, by a development of energetic mass action, by a decisive united struggle.

The opposition however, set to work hesitatingly. The leadership of the popular movement was weak, undecided and inconsistent. It yielded step by step and prepared for capitulation. This permitted fascism to gather and group its forces, to impose its totalitarian rule and to prepare the new stage of development of Italian imperialism characterized by the conquest of Ethiopia, by the extensive intervention in Spain, the slavish adherence to Hitler Germany, the invasion of Albania and by the feverish preparation for a war against France.

The commemoration of the murder of Matteotti should not only be an act of homage but first of all a sharp reminder of the necessity of drawing the lessons, especially of the need to put an end to all capitulations, to forge and strengthen the unity of anti-fascist and non-fascist masses, to clear away all illusions about a "peaceful" fascism.

FROM THE RISE OF FASCISM TO THE MURDER OF MATTEOTTI

At the outbreak of the imperialist World War in 1914, the Italian capitalists split into two camps, one favoring neutrality, the other favoring intervention, that is to say, the participation of Italy on the side of the allies.

One of the most noisy mouthpieces of the interventionists was Mussolini, the editor in chief of the Socialist Central Party organ *Avanti.*

On November 15, 1914, after having been forced to resign the editorship of *Avanti,* Mussolini, with the help of French subsidies, began the publication of the daily newspaper *Popolo d'Italia* (the constantly reappearing report that Mussolini had received fifteen million gold francs from the French government at the outbreak of the world war was never denied). This newspaper dedicated itself completely to the fanning of war hatred.

At the end of 1914 the Leagues of Interventionist Action (*Fasci d'azione Interventista*) was founded to assist interventionist propaganda. This League was led by Mussolini and Bissolati and in a short while, by the end of February, 1914, it comprised 105 groups with a

total of 9,000 members. The whole country was brought to a state of excitement and unrest, the pressure of the imperialist circles was increased and the supporters of neutrality constantly lost ground. At the end of April, 1915, the Italian government concluded with the allies the secret agreement of London, which has since been made public. In it Italy was promised the "unredeemed" Austro-Hungarian territories, the actual control of the Adriatic, the Albanian port of Valona and, providing France and England increased their colonial possessions at the expense of Germany, colonies in Africa. In May, 1915, Italy declared war on its former allies.

The imperialist war was totally unpopular among the common people of Italy. At the end of the war Italy was confronted with great difficulties. The demobilized soldiers, on returning to their homes, found no work, the people had to line up for bread, the cost of living rose, money was devaluated. The workers were in a state of ferment, the landless peasants occupied the lands of large landowners. The great socialist October Revolution lit the path for the masses. Strikes, demonstrations, the occupation of factories, partition of lands, shattered the rule of the capitalists.

Was Italian imperialism satisfied with its victory over the central European powers? Undoubtedly Italy received, thanks to the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy, a considerable increase of territory and power. The fundamental question of Italian imperialism, however, was not solved. Italy remained a country without raw materials, the Dalmatian coast of the Adriatic was ceded to Jugoslavia, Greece received a number of Mediterranean islands of strategic importance. Her colonial aspirations, dealt with in the London agreement, were not satisfied. Mr. Wilson, President of the U.S.A. declared that his country, not having signed this agreement, did not feel bound by it. The outcome of the war, unsatisfactory to the Italian ruling class, increased uneasiness and fostered further unrest. The adherents of neutrality who numbered also the Catholics again lifted their heads.

The capitalists were faced with a situation difficult in two respects. On the one hand it feared the loss of its property, privileges and power; it had not a sufficient mass basis among the population; on the other hand it saw itself robbed of the fruits of victory and considered it necessary to arm once more, to gather new forces, to prepare another war, in order to "change its luck." In this situation twenty years ago on March 23, 1919, Mussolini formed his fighting leagues *Fasci di Combattimento.* The financial powers behind this movement assigned it the following tasks: to break the backbone of the Italian Socialist workers' movement, to deliver the working class to the exploiters, to enslave the peasantry, to take away the rights of the whole working population, to hand over to the financial magnates and trust owners the riches of the land for unrestricted plunder, and to put all the resources of Italy at the service of rearmament. The *Fasci* were comprised of disillusioned officers, non-commissioned officers, demobilized adventurers, sons of rich peasants, thugs and hooligans, worthless and idle elements, braggarts and beggars, lazy and declassed people, the scum of the towns, the dregs of all classes. The capitalists who considered themselves swindled in the imperialist division of spoils, lusting for plunder, found in these units the required support. The big trusts, the semi-feudal nobility and owners of large estates, nourished fascism with their money.

The fascist storm troops, the *Squadre,* overran the country. They attacked peaceful working class districts and peasant villages, beat up their inhabitants, kidnapped them, violated and killed many of them, broke up their homes, set fire to their goods and chattels. They forced anti-fascists to drink castor oil and gloated over their suffering. Socialist councilors were made to resign by force. Socialist newspapers, Catholic meeting-places and workers' homes were destroyed. An *official* fascist historian

gives the following data for the first half-year of 1921: the fascists destroyed in that period 17 daily newspapers and printing offices, 59 labor headquarters, 119 labor exchanges, 83 peasant and land workers' unions, 151 Socialist and Communist groups and 151 cultural circles.

The fascists received arms from the army, military instructors were put at their disposal. The so-called "justice" prostituted itself and took no notice of the fascist acts of violence. The police and the gendarmes either played the game of "non-intervention" or very often openly supported the party of fascist incendiaries. The working class took up the struggle heroically, but it was split. It had not at its head a mass Bolshevik Party steeled in the struggle and, worst of all, it had in its own ranks agents of the capitalists, advocates of class collaboration, defeatists and capitulators. The Catholic Party, the *Partito Popolare*, pursued a two-faced policy which, in the long run, was to the advantage of fascism. The constantly changing governments could not bring themselves to take any definite action against the spreading fascist anarchy, some of the members of the government even supported the fascists. The court and the Vatican assumed partly a loyal attitude towards fascism and partly supported it directly.

By sword and fire, by dagger and castor oil, by assassination and murder, by lies and demagogy, fascism succeeded in overpowering its opponents.

Mussolini could finally prepare his so-called march on Rome. The federation of industries, the large estate owners, the trust magnates financed this so-called fascist "revolution." Even the Freemasons contributed two and one-half million lire which earned at a later date the gratitude of Mussolini, who disbanded their lodges, exiled their grand masters to an island and ever since treated them as rabble. From the king's own hands Mussolini received the premiership. Rotten capitalism received a government it deserved. The seat of government was turned into a tavern.

The activity of the government under fascist leadership was a proper windfall for the large industrialists. A real rain of gold in the shape of government loans, orders, contracts, subsidies and concessions poured into the pockets of heavy industrialists. Taxes on large incomes were considerable reduced, large industrial undertakings and banks which had become bankrupt were set on their feet again by government financial assistance. The fascist parasites enriched themselves, crammed their pockets with commissions and bribes. The opponents of fascism were heavily oppressed. Their meetings were forbidden and dispersed. Their newspapers were suppressed by means of trickery and violence. The fascist bands carried on with their acts of violence, kidnapping anti-fascists, murdering and assassinating, attacking and destroying the remaining wretched Socialist publishers and printing offices. In spite of it all, fascism had not yet reached its totalitarian state.

The opposition was inwardly weakened. In the bourgeois and reformist parties there were quite a number of people who, on the "basis of facts," openly or covertly limited their demands to the "stabilization" of the new regime. Even in the Communist Party there was not a unified conception of fascism, only the consistently Marxist-Leninist group around Comrade Gramsci (who was tortured to death at a later date in a fascist prison) saw clearly the way before it. The working class movement bled from all its wounds. The heavy losses suffered by the working class movement, the deep cleavage and the lack of clarity in its ranks, the fateful policy of Social-Democracy, slackened the activity of the working class. Deep down in the masses there was a feeling of resentment and ferment, but this discontent was never expressed in mass action.

Even in the fascist party itself there were deep differences and considerable friction. The petty bourgeois supporters were disappointed by the solidly plutocratic capitalist policy of the regime. On the other hand the most aggressive

elements, who today are the vanguard of Hitlerism in Italy, wanted a quicker tempo in the establishment of the totalitarian rule of fascism.

In order to oust the opposition from the parliamentary field as well, the new regime introduced an election law which guaranteed two-thirds of the parliamentary seats to the party obtaining 25 per cent of the votes cast. On April 6, 1924, parliamentary elections were carried out under this law. They were prepared in an atmosphere of open violence. The opposition candidates were dragged out of bed at night and taken away. Some of them were forced by beatings and threats to withdraw from the elections. The opposition election meetings were forcibly dispersed. Their propaganda was hindered by all means of open terror, the electorate was intimidated. Falsification of election results was one of the mildest methods used in order to attain the desired results. Of the 7,500,000 votes cast, 4,200,000 were for the government and the remainder for the opposition, including 1,100,000 for the socialist parties (reformists, Maximalists and Communists). Matteotti was re-elected as deputy.

On May 30 he made a great speech in Parliament. In spite of the interruptions by the howls of enraged fascist deputies, he exposed the election methods of the rulers of Italy. By this action he signed his own death warrant, as he himself expressed it to one of his colleagues in the opposition.

THE KIDNAPPING AND MURDER OF MATTEOTTI

On the afternoon of June 10, 1924, Matteotti left his residence for Parliament. In an open street he was suddenly surrounded by five individuals, who, in spite of his resistance, pushed him into a waiting motor car. He was murdered outside the town. His disappearance aroused public opinion on a very wide scale. This kidnapping was an obvious expression of the state of things in the country brought about by fascism. It was impossible to hush up the crime; public opinion demanded justice and punishment of the criminals.

It was possible to ascertain, thanks to a disinterested eye-witness who happened to notice the number of the car from his residence, that this car was hired from a garage which usually served the Ministry of Interior. It was further proved that the car of Amerigo Dumini was borrowed at the request of Filippelli, the director of the fascist newspaper *Corriere Italiano*. Clues led to Cesare Rossi, chief of the Prime Minister's press department, Finzi, Under-Secretary of the Ministry of Interior and the Chief of the Security Police, General de Bono (the same general who was appointed by the government to bring "civilization" to the Ethiopians in the course of the Ethiopian war). The clues led to Marinelli, secretary of the fascist party, to the private secretary of Mussolini; they led to the highest government officials.

All these individuals were fascists from the "first hour of inception," which actually means that they were lawbreakers "every hour" of their lives. Dumini openly boasted of having committed twelve murders in the "national interest" and on "higher" command. This "national" professional murderer was quite at home in the Ministry of Interior and was one of the most intimate associates of the ruling clique. The highest chief of this band of brigands at first rubbed his hands with satisfaction. On the day after the murder of Matteotti he said to Cesare Rossi: "Matteotti was always looking for opposition, now the opposition is seeking him in a knacker's yard."

On the evening of June 11 he declared with an unprecedented cynicism: "The Pussists (Socialists) are uneasy because they cannot find Matteotti . . . he ought to have gone to . . ." (here he used an unprintable expression).

Soon he stopped laughing. The whole country demanded: "Where is Matteotti?" The head of the government had to answer questions in parliament. An opposition member of parliament threw the accusation in his face that he was

an accomplice in the murder. There was a daily "pilgrimage" of large masses of people to the place where Matteotti was pushed into the car of the murderers. The crowds covered the place with flowers. The factories struck work repeatedly.

The government was forced to order the arrest of Dumini and Rossi. Finzi, General de Bono and other "dignitaries" of the government, compromised by the murder, were obliged to resign from their posts. The masses stirred and the foundations of fascism crumbled under their feet. At the recruiting stations of the National Militia, only 48 per cent of those called up appeared in Rome, 18 per cent in Milan and only a few in Turin. All conditions for the building of a wide front of liberation against fascism were ripe.

Dumini declared when arrested that he knew nothing and that even if he had known anything he would not disclose it. General de Bono advised him: "Deny it, deny it, deny it!" At the same time Dumini informed his superiors that he could not "stand a long imprisonment" without packing up. In fact disclosures were soon forthcoming. Dumini, Rossi, Filippelli made sensational declarations, composed long memoranda pointing out the real culprits.

The opposition parties left parliament. The Communists, who also left with them, proposed to call upon the workers and peasants to strike and refuse to work and to organize an opposition parliament. The opposition parties were afflicted, however, by the disease of half-measures and indecision. Their principle demands were the dissolution of the National Militia and the stopping of the "illegal acts" of the government. They gave no clear lead to the people, they did not appeal to the country to bring to an end the regime of murderers, they did not direct the masses towards its overthrow. On the contrary they advocated the reforming of the fascist system and its stabilization.

The reformists even turned against the spontaneous strikes of the workers, calling on them to preserve discipline. The opposition did not distribute (legally or illegally), as soon as they became known, the memoranda of the imprisoned murderers of Matteotti, in which the gangster methods of the fascist rulers were glaringly exposed. They remained content with sending petitions to the king, falling over themselves in declamations and bragging about "illegality" and justice.

The Communist Party alone was too weak to convert the change in the outlook of the people into mass activity for a conscious aim. Although the Communist Party had adopted in general a correct attitude under the leadership of Gramsci and his close associates, it had not completely overcome in all its units, the sectarian aftermath of Bordiga-ism —that faction which later on became a Trotsky-fascist agency. The Party, therefore, was not in a position to place itself at the head of the working class and the popular movement in order to give it a correct direction and aim. A development of the Matteotti crisis demonstrates once again that the proletariat can wage against its class enemy important battles successfully only when it is united and has at its head a party of a new type, a *Bolshevik, Marxist-Leninist party.*

The opposition lost precious time which fascism knew how to utilize for the regrouping and consolidating of its ranks. Under the guise of initial concessions to "democracy," the government actually increased and intensified the terror against the opposition. The already extremely limited "freedom" of the press was still further throttled. The wretched "freedom" of action was still further restricted. House searches and arrests followed each other. While the opposition chattered the government *acted.* To the baton blows of the government the opposition answered by "moral" wailing. The hesitating elements, who, under the impression of the insecurity of the regime, started deserting it, turned back and came again under its sway.

The fascist masters began to take decisive action against the opposition. As

it would not be a hammer it became an anvil. As the opposition did not take any decisive steps towards the liquidation of the fascist center of contagion, the fascists were able to prepare themselves for its suppression.

In November, 1926, the anti-fascists were, in practice, outlawed. Opposition parties and organizations were forbidden, the opposition press was destroyed and closed down. The opposition leaders were either persecuted, imprisoned and tortured to death, or obliged to escape into exile. A special court of justice was instituted for political "crime" and death sentences were passed and are still being passed. Fascism penetrated into every pore of the society. It completely interlaced the state apparatus, it established its totality.

The Matteotti crisis demonstrated how inwardly fragile was fascism. The contradictions between its promises to establish "order," bring "peace" to the country, to satisfy the requirements of the people, and the deeds of fascism with its daily crimes, murders, disorganization and destruction, became clear to everybody. The Italian people gained an insight into the depraved workings of fascism, they saw how deeply it sank in the mire. The contradictions between the people and the government were sharpened. The mass basis of fascism dwindled away and threatened to disintegrate altogether .

Only the procrastinations and the passivity of the opposition gave it a breathing space which it utilized for the intensification of terror, for the organization of the apparatus of suppression and for the intimidation of the wavering elements. The so-called "totality" was actually the expression of the weakness of the regime which could no longer rule by means of "normal" methods of oppression, but had to bring them all to a head.

THE NEW STAGE OF ITALIAN IMPERIALISM

With the establishment of fascist totality which, for historical, political and economic reasons matured slower in Italy than in Hitler Germany, a new stage of development was reached. The large capitalists had reached their first goal: the people were at their mercy, legal opposition and legal control were done away with, no limits were set to exploitation. Thus the ruling class was now in a position to prepare itself for the new war period of development of Italian imperialism, through which it is passing now.

Italian imperialism is full of inner contradictions. The country lacks raw materials, it has insufficent capital to open up its colonies, to export capital, to create a labor aristocracy, to carry out in a "normal" manner the heavy armament program indispensable for a "major" war. Italian imperialism is inwardly empty, anemic, a glutton breathing its last, an asthmatic monster. Italian fascism, which arose, as we have seen, from the interventionist movement, had as its "mission," the converting of the inner tension of starved Italian imperialism into circulating capital, making it "dynamic" and "fruitful." The large sums of money for rearmament, for the maintenance of a large standing army, for the construction of an air force, for police, gendarmerie and the Ovra (Secret Police), for the blackshirt and colonial troops, are literally squeezed out of the people. For the benefit of the large trusts in which the family of Mussolini-Ciano has a considerable interest, the whole of industry and finance are "guided" to further war preparations.

The fascist regime openly preaches war, war as the "purpose of existence," "war for war's sake," war as the "mother" of culture.

Mussolini declares that peace would be a "catastrophe" for the people. "Thanks to war, we have become what we are. . . ." "Fascism since its beginning has been a war-like revolution." "The human, anti-romantic, positive appreciation of war is characteristic of the working class and peasant people." Such and similar glorification of robber warfare in countless variations can be read throughout the whole of the fascist press

and fascist literature. Even children are educated in the spirit of war. Ideas of class struggle latent in the working class are falsified by the fascists into war propaganda. The whole of social life is under the sign of mass murder.

Ethiopia was a disappointment; the new empire only increased the burden of the people. That is why the fascists are rearming for a war on the side of Hitler Germany against the "rich" states. In this war it hopes to be able to rob territories already opened up, with their natural resources already developed. The regime has chained its destiny to Hitler Germany. It apes in everything and anything its "younger brother" Hitler fascism. It robs the Jews, scoffs at Catholics and foams at the mouth against democracy. It wantonly destroys the wealth of the nation, it poisons the minds of the people, it endangers the independence of Italy.

It is a fateful illusion to imagine that fascist Italy can be torn away from the axis. Fascism *is* war, is robbery, plunder, oppression of other peoples. It is impossible to "buy it out" by concessions. Fascism can neither be satisfied nor pacified, it can only be struck down.

* * *

Fifteen years after the murder of Matteotti, the world is confronted with a new frightful slaughter, which the axis powers will wreak on mankind unless all the people come together in a mighty, united, powerful, fighting front against fascism. The opposition was wrecked in 1924 because it did not *fight* with courage, determination and force, relying on the unconquerable energy of the working class and the common people. The people will be condemned to slavery if they follow the alluring calls of the capitulationist heroes and yield to the fascist gentlemen of the tavern. The people will be victorious over the slave-drivers if they have faith in their own strength, if they *fight.*

Italian fascism has not solved a single question confronting the common people. Its war policy lays unbearable burdens upon the working people. Their wages are drastically cut, work in factories is enormously speeded up. They are deprived of their freedom of action. The craving for land by the peasants was not satisfied as always the best and most fertile land is in the hands of the nobility, the large estate owners. The peasants are crushed by the weight of taxes, enormous debts, enforced prices and other forcible measures. While the profits of the large companies soar to a fantastic height, the crafts are wrecked and the industrial undertakings of medium and small size are driven to their ruin.

Among the masses grow discontent, a desire for a change, resentment against the handing over of the country to Hitlerism.

Up to the present, the fascist social order was unable to win to its side the workers, especially the skilled workers who adopt a hostile attitude towards it. The peasantry murmurs, the middle classes point with a finger at the black-shirted "bosses" who live on the fat of the land, but they welcome the sight of workers.

"Uneasiness" penetrates right into the ranks of the fascist party, creating the potential opposition. Even in the army there are circles opposed to the far too close ties of the axis. Italian fascism is a swamp, it is eaten up with rottenness. Its much advertised "power" can deceive only those who wish to be deceived. Below the surface the will of the working class and the common people for the reckoning with the fascists is maturing. It becomes ever clearer to the masses that the fascist social order cannot avoid its fate. Those nations prepared to fight will have the Italian people at their side. The united, self-assured, awakened Italian people, with the working class at their head, will achieve what the opposition failed to do in 1924 —the overthrow of fascism.

The Generation of Communism

BY G. FRIEDRICH

EACH time Comrade Stalin delivers a report, makes a speech or answers a letter, the very first impression and feeling one gets from reading his simple language is that Stalin has stated clearly what all of us have been thinking confusedly; at one stroke he has brought our own immature idea to full fruition. That is the first impression. But afterwards, when one reads Stalin through again and again, one unearths fresh profundities and new ideas. There is much that can only be understood, in its full significance, after some time. That is why one returns constantly to these words and ideas, in order to grasp them in their full significance.

Stalin, like Lenin before him, is a great master of thinking things out to the end, that rare kind of wisdom which tracks things down to rock bottom and discloses their innermost essence. With unerring insight he realizes what will live but a day or an hour, and what will grow into a new phenomenon, into a new law of social evolution. What strikes us as an isolated fact is for Stalin the germ of the hidden future. That is why there lies such wisdom within his simplicity.

And so it was on this occasion. Everything which Stalin told the Eighteenth Party Congress of the Bolsheviks about the people, the cadres who were called upon to take the helm of the state machine of socialist society, threw a flood of light on the past and the present, and opened the broadest perspectives for the future.

Time and again the Bolsheviks have thrown overboard all the calculations and hopes of the croaking "prophets" from the camp of the enemy. While these croakers were proclaiming the "sacrifice of the Bolshevik purges" and prophesying that after the alleged loss of the "old experienced cadres" the Party would run aground in the directing of socialist economy and the socialist state, the Bolsheviks safely and soundly cleansed their ranks of refuse, of debased, degenerate, treacherous individuals, and raised hundreds of thousands of new, fresh, skilled, morally and politically strong builders of socialism to the highest rank in Soviet construction.

The Soviet state is young. Twenty-one years—that is the span for the growing up of a generation. But the Bolsheviks have gone ahead twice as fast as time. During this time they recreated their country, changed it from the bottom up, stirred up and remodelled the village, transformed the map of the nation, and left not one neglected corner untouched. That is one thing. And at the same time they bestowed their greatest care on that power which fulfils every advance and for which it is fulfilled: living man. Man was, and is, the central point of their attention. The Bolsheviks have raised in their struggles and victories a generation of whose members Stalin says so graphically:

". . . they develop and acquire knowledge so rapidly, they press upward so eagerly, that the time is not far off when they will overtake the old fellows, take their stand side by side with them, and

become a worthy replacement for them."*

In life and in the history of all countries and peoples so far, the rule has been that he who attains the position of a successor pushes his predecessor into the grave. When, one hundred and fifty years ago, the young bourgeoisie of France pushed the old order of society into its grave, it could number hundreds of generals, leaders and socially active people who were no older than from twenty to thirty years. That was splendid. It was something new, and filled the hearts of people of that time with enthusiasm. Yet how brief and fleeting this youth of the bourgeoisie was!

Even in France, country of the classic bourgeois revolution, it passed very quickly. For it grew on bad ground, poisoned by the blood and sweat of millions of the exploited, saturated with the disease of the struggle for money and power. Even by the time of the imperialist wars of Napoleon, in the corruption and depravity of the Second and Third Empires, the bourgeoisie had exhausted its supply of honest youth and produced the thoroughly depraved "golden youth."

The fading developed speedily into old age and disintegration, for which the dying class can find no antidote. . . . The decay of the capitalist world also laid hold of the Social-Democratic workers' movement. In all the Social-Democratic Parties and organizations, the "problem of the change of generation" played no lesser a role than in the bourgeoisie. The "superannuation" of nearly all the parties made it easy for the fascists to attract large sections of the rising generation. Moreover, through the elimination of the younger generation, the ideological and political struggle within Social-Democracy was frequently perverted into a "struggle of the generations." Ambitious pushers like Spaak and others adopted the air of spokesmen of the "youth" and disguised their unscrupulous reformism as "activism," as opposition to the "old set." It is the decline and rotting of the capitalist world that is reflected in such happenings as this, and which corrupted a section of the youth. The "Hitler Youth" really does nothing but express the ignominious and revolting senility of the bourgeoisie. Only the working class can restore to the world its youth and give it fresh, warm blood.

From the first days of their struggle for the real party of the working class and for the conquest of power by the working class, the Bolsheviks have championed the youth. Lenin wrote on the eve of the Revolution of 1905:

"I would like to see everyone shot, there and then, who has the face to make the assertion that there are no people. There are in Russia countless people, and we have simply to work more fearlessly and boldly, more boldly and fearlessly, and again more fearlessly and again more boldly, among the youth, without *being afraid of them.*"

These words were underlined by Lenin. It was Lenin, too, who declared unremitting war on the "idiotic, philistine, Oblomovish fear of the youth." Lenin wrote in a letter to the old Bolshevik Gussev: "I implore you: fight with all your might against this fear."

But who was it who feared the youth? The same who fear them today: the opportunists who look not forwards but backwards, who recoil in terror from the tumultuous power of the working class and are ready for every compromise and every bargain with the bourgeoisie, only to avoid disturbing the quiet of the old, conventional, diseased world. Lenin gave this answer to the Mensheviks, who complained that numbers of young workers were joining the Party:

"We are the Party of the future, but the future belongs to the youth. We are the Party of innovators, but it is to the innovators that the youth always gladly give allegiance. We are the Party of self-sacrificing struggle against the old rottenness, but it will always be the youth that are most ready for self-sacri-

* Joseph Stalin, *From Socialism to Communism in the Soviet Union*, pp. 14-15, International Publishers, New York.

ficing struggle. . . . We shall always be the Party of the youth of the advanced class!"

When Lenin was still a young student, he was known as the "old man" in revolutionary circles. This comradely nickname was an expression of boundless respect for his spirit, his knowledge, and the complete unification in him of revolutionary theory and revolutionary practice. The "old man" Lenin personified at one and the same time the inborn youth and the ripeness of the class which is destined to change the world.

But Lenin and the Bolsheviks have never taken out a patent for either age or youth. Neither Lenin nor Stalin have ever painted either the Old Guard of Bolshevism or the youth as a god to whom one must pray. Neither length of Party membership, former services, nor illegal work could or can serve in the Bolshevik Party as a shield from criticism for actual mistakes, nor from criticism of men who have lost what Stalin called "the feeling for what is new, a valuable possession of every Bolshevist functionary."

But what is this feeling for what is new? Stalin has explained very well what it means: Always to look ahead and not behind, not to stay stuck in what is old, promptly to set one's eyes on new circumstances, new shoots and new tasks.

However, the Bolsheviks were not and are not of the opinion that this feeling for what is new is the essential attribute of every person merely because he is young. Nor does it necessarily desert him who has grown old in body. The feeling for what is new does not fall from the skies. It is no gift of the gods. It exists only there where men are inspired by the clear and wide perspective of the advance to communism. It only lives and does not die away where revolutionary theory and revolutionary practice are most closely interlocked and give in each struggle a certainty of goal and a confidence in victory, a faith in the strength of the people and in the possibility of overcoming each and every obstacle in unity with the masses, at the head of the masses, for the sake of living men, and for the sake of the cause of communism.

Smiling young people mounted the tribune of the Eighteenth Party Congress, people of whom a few years earlier no one in the country was aware. And by them stood people who had grown gray in the struggle for socialism. The youth felt themselves to be equals, and they were regarded as equals. And both alike were elected by the Party Congress onto the leading bodies of the Party. And the one group, like the other, is leading the most difficult and responsible sectors of socialist construction, for which there is no sort of a recipe and no "book of rules" at their disposal. The number of old Bolsheviks is certainly incomparably the smaller. It could not be otherwise. In the Bolshevik Party today those who joined the Party before 1917 number 0.3 per cent. Those who joined it between 1917 and 1919 are only 5.3 per cent. While the number of those who joined the Party in 1929 or since, are 70 per cent. To take just the Red Army. During 1933 101,200 members were accepted into the Party organizations of the Red Army, in January this year 10,581 and in February, 11,118. These are all young men who have come from the collective farms, socialist factories and universities, willing, conscious and proud of the victories of their country and of their assured participation in these victories. Before these young fighters for socialism were accepted into the Party, they were called *non-Party Bolsheviks.* In the Soviet Union there is no higher commendation than this term, for on the lips of Soviet people it means that the person is worthy to be *a member of the Party of the Bolsheviks.*

A clear path for these youth! When did the Party say these words? Not at the Eighteenth Party Congress, but a long, long time earlier. The Party Congress weighed in the balance a grand and important period in the life of the Party and the people. But perhaps the

most outstanding and significant record is the figure which Stalin gave: 500,000 young Bolsheviks and non-Party Bolsheviks were promoted by the Party into leading positions. Five hundred thousand, half-a-million people—fearless, young, able-bodied, armed with knowledge, burningly devoted to socialism! Can anything compare with this abundance?

The Trotskyite law-breakers have not merely injured socialist economy, murdered leading men of the people and betrayed the Soviet country to the fascist enemy, but they have impeded the rise of young forces at every turn. It was their intention to let young forces get "rusty" and "sour," as Stalin put it. When the current of the Soviet people swept away the garbage of decaying capitalism, the Trotskyites and Bukharinites, the way was also cleared for the young people. The enemies of the people had been trying by every means to preserve in people's minds one of the most disgusting residues of capitalist oppression: lack of faith in one's own capacity and intelligence.

Under the rule of tsarism the workers had a well-founded mistrust of the bourgeois intelligentsia, but at the same time they tended to overestimate the knowledge and capacity of the intellectuals. In the socialist world there has proceeded from the mass of the people a new intelligentsia which has nothing in common with those bourgeois intelligentsia, those subservient lackeys of the ruling class—an intelligentsia which is blood of the blood and flesh of the flesh of the people. The people's enemies attempted to extend the disillusionment of the workers regarding the bourgeois intelligentsia to the new, socialist intelligentsia, and so to breed a harmful deprecation of the most gifted and earnest sons and daughters of the people. The Party also put the people on its guard against this maneuver of the enemy.

The Soviet intelligentsia is the best children of the working people, they are its hope for the present and the future. The Soviet intelligentsia—they are the workers and peasants to whom victorious socialism has opened the door of education and culture. A free path to the Soviet intelligentsia! From being a watchword of the Party, it has become the watchword of the entire people.

On October 2, 1920, Lenin said:

"The generation which is today about fifty years old can no longer expect to experience communist society. By that time this generation will have died out. But the generation that is now fifteen years old will experience communist society and will itself build that society. And it must know that its whole life work consists in building that society."

The Party has brought up a new generation which knows that its whole life work is the building of communism. This generation has not pushed aside the older generation, no; it has united with it to make a powerful orchestra, an unbreakable unity in work, struggle and victory. This unbreakable unity of old and young is one of the most vital constituents of the moral and political unity of the Soviet people. Hand in hand with the generation of the great socialist October Revolution, the generation of communism is realizing the old, but ever young, dream of a world in which men are not slaves, but shape production and society of their own free will.

The Record of German Decline

THE German fascist leaders of economy can see financial catastrophe approaching. Characteristic of this fact is the sensational new "Finance Plan" which Funk, the Reich economics minister and Reichsbank president, announced last March. At the first meeting of the central board of the Reichsbank, Funk, speaking on "the bases of the new credit and financial policy, the industrial and financial-political situation, and Germany's industrial and financial relations with foreign countries," endeavored to engender the illusion that, by means of this "new finance plan":

'. . . the great economic area indicated by nature, from the North Sea to the Black Sea, may be made more productive and more advantageous for all countries interested."

As an example of this more "productive and advantageous" utilization of the "great economic area" Funk mentioned the German-Rumanian economic agreement:

"Germany is giving long-term credits in semi-finished and finished products, which are in their turn paid for by the products of the labor of the Rumanian people. . . . Thus, our products take the place of currency in Rumania while Rumanian raw materials take the place of foreign exchange here. . . . On this basis, Rumania can finance her new production with additional *lei* [the Rumanian unit of currency—*Trans.*] and we ours with additional Reichsmarks. The banking transaction is then merely a technical problem."

It is, however, not unknown that this "technical question"—with which the fascist economic leaders have for a considerable time been wrestling, will remain for them a problem for just so long as other countries fail to see their way to assist in solving it in the manner desired by Hitler-Germany

NAZI INFLATION

Funk described the tasks of the new financial policy as follows:

"1. To postpone debt payments as far as possible;
"2. To spare the Reich an intolerable burden of interest;
"3. To place the capital market again at the disposal of private economy." (*National-Zeitung*, Essen, March 31, 1939.)

In actual practice, the new financial program will appear as follows:

"The Reich is now to secure the means for covering its expenditure by 'tax coupons.' Of these, there will be two kinds. Series I will be accepted seven months after issue by the revenue offices in payment of Reich taxes. Series II will be accepted 37 months after issue, also in payment of taxes, at 112 per cent of face value.

"But now comes the important feature: The national government, the provinces, municipalities, county councils, state railways, post office, state motor-highways, and other bodies designated by the finance minister, *pay for supplies, services, etc.*, from industrial undertakings *in these tax coupons* to the extent of 40 per cent of the total account, one-half in Series I and the other in Series II. On their side, the *private industrial concerns*, legally recognized as corporations, and industrial joint-stock companies, have the right also to pay for supplies and other services to the extent of 40 per cent of the total account, in tax coupons. . . .

"Funk is doing the most dangerous thing he could for currency: out of these new state issues he is making a currency, hard cash. His 'tax coupons' are nothing less than *a new type of banknote*, completely uncovered paper, which

will henceforth be brought into circulation in addition to the existing currency. . . .

"This new, uncontrollable period of inflation, which Funk is now inaugurating, is all the more hazardous as it is superimposed upon an already existing and far advanced inflation which has only been kept in check by the most forcible measures. . . .

"Under Hitler, the total national debt rose from 11,700,000,000 marks to 25,700,000,000 marks by September, 1938. And the rate of speed has been increasing. In the first four years of Hitler's regime, indebtedness rose by 6,000,000,000 marks. But in the following year alone, it rose another 8,000,000,000 marks. In expert financial circles, the entire public indebtedness of Germany (including provinces and municipalities) is estimated at 60,000,000,000 marks, of which we may allow 20,000,000,000 marks for special exchange account and time treasury bills, and 1,000,000,000 marks for the so-called acceptance bills, the real floating debt therefore being 21,000,000,000 and not about 6,000,000,000 marks." (Dr. R. Kern, "Die Hitler-inflation," in the *Neuer Vörwaerts*, April 2, 1939.)

On March 31, the Essen *National-Zeitung* stated that the "chief task, imposed by order of the Fuehrer" upon Funk was "the stabilization of the currency." But Funk will not be able to carry out this task. In the last week in March, the circulation of paper money in Germany rose by 847,217,000 marks. The total amount of paper money in circulation has reached 8,310,994,000, the highest point since the termination of the first German inflation period. Even if a proportion of the recently issued 847,217,000 paper marks returns to the Reichsbank after final use, the record "high" of paper money circulation nevertheless indicates distinctly that — taking also into account the employment of the new "tax coupons" as currency— Germany has already entered upon the path of real inflation.

On March 27, the *Nationalzeitung* of Basle, Switzerland, wrote as follows, with regard to the new "financial plan":

"The decision of the German finance minister to pay for deliveries to the state in credit coupons to the extent of 40 per cent has made a deep impression upon the City [of London—*Trans.*]. All the experts agree that this is paper inflation, no longer concealed but obvious for German industry would soon come to a standstill if it could not discount these credit coupons, in other words: exchange them for banknotes. As the filling of orders from the state now forms the chief activity of German industry, this equals *large-scale inflation.* . . . The German contention, that, thanks to the incorporation of Czechoslovakia and the trade agreement with Rumania, the Reich has now become blockade-proof, may be dismissed with a shrug of the shoulders; because we remember from the time of the world war that the compulsory labor of an oppressed people is particularly unproductive. . . . "

COMPULSORY LABOR AND IMPOVERISHMENT

But it is not only the Austrians, Sudeten Germans, Czechs and Memellanders who are assigned to compulsory labor; the entire toiling German people is also included. In the category of compulsory labor belong the "labor service," the "land year," the "duty year," the impressed work on fortifications—but it may in reality be said that all work in Germany nowadays is of the order of compulsory labor. Fascism forcibly stations a worker in a particular job which he dare not quit. A report from Berlin reads as follows:

"A bricklayer who, in spite of the refusal of permission by the Labor Exchange, left his job in order to take up a better one in a sugar factory, has been sentenced to two months' imprisonment. The court, in giving judgment, stated that the prisoner's action was against the interests of the people."

It is a well-known fact that in times when there is a shortage of labor, many workers endeavor to find better paid employment. The Nazi authorities have set up a double barrier to this quite natural proceeding. First, they forbid increases in wages, and, second, they forbid any worker to change his position without the consent of the Labor Exchange.

So much for compulsion; but when we come to consider the income of the German workers, we find, to use the figures reported in the London *Evening Standard* of February 23, that 63 per cent of German working people have an income of less than 1,200 marks per annum. Of these 63 per cent, 20 per cent are married men; 29 per cent have an income of between 1,200 and 3,000 marks per year, and only 8 per cent get over 3,000 marks.

These estimates are based upon the German official statistics of the income tax revenue for the year 1934. However, no increases in wages have taken place since then which would render the picture any brighter. Furthermore, all wage increases are forbidden by the new "financial plan." On the other hand, the cost of living is rising steadily. As the Essen *National-Zeitung* reported on April 2:

"The Reich index average figure for living costs for the month of March, 1939, stands at 126 (as compared with 100 for 1913-1914); it has increased from last month (125.7) by 0.3 per cent.

"In the index figure for foodstuffs, which rose from 121.9 to 122.5 (increase of 0.6 per cent), the seasonal rise in prices of potatoes and vegetables has taken further effect. In addition, the index figure for clothing has risen from 132.3 to 132.7 (increase of 0.4)."

THE EXTERMINATION OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

But it is not only the working class which is disastrously affected by the coercive economic system of Germany, but the middle class also. A short time ago, a decree was issued that businesses must show a yearly turnover of 10,000 marks, or be shut down. [At current rates, 10,000 marks is £830, at par £500.]Quite simply, this decree is fatal to smaller businesses. Furthermore, in cases of non-payment of taxes, no more postponements will be allowed; if a business cannot pay, it will simply be seized in destraint. This measure almost always means that the debtor loses his business; and this is precisely the object the Nazis had in mind when they devised this. According to the figures given in the February number of the official review, *Wirtschaft und Statistik* (*Economy and Statistics*), 28,559 small firms were liquidated in 1938, as compared with 17,829 in 1937. The *Deutsche Bergwerkzeitung* states, with regard to the first special decrees aiming at a so-called reform of the hand-made boot and shoe and repairing trade, that 25,000 workshops will have to be closed down so that:

". . . a large number of discreditable, insufficiently skilled and incapable shoemakers will be permanently excluded from the craft, thus affording considerable greater opportunities of existence for the remaining respectable handicraftsmen."

The newspaper goes on to inform us that the number of German shoemakers' shops had declined from 161,000 in 1933 (when Hitler came to power) by some 20,000, to about 140,000 in 1938; and that, by the end of 1939, this figure should be further reduced to about 115,000. The official *Deutsche Arbeitskorrespondenz* on March 17 wrote that "within an appreciable period some 580,000 unprofitable small businesses should eventually disappear."

Among these, the publication especially mentioned: bakers, butchers, barbers, men's tailors and shoemakers. It then stated that "a new order of precedence, in the allocation of labor to the various industries" was necessary, in order to ensure the supply of labor "for tasks of particular governmental and political importance."

SHORTAGE OF LABOR AND INCREASING EXPLOITATION

The *shortage of skilled labor* is becoming ever more and more apparent in Germany today. It is reported from Reichenberg, Sudetenland, that the Labor Exchanges there are conducting a vigorous "recruiting campaign" to secure 5,000 North Bohemian working men and women to go to work in explosives factories in Germany proper. So far, how-

ever, they have been able to secure only a few dozen. The review *Soziale Praxis* reports in its February number:

"In the middle of 1937, 150,000 less apprentices finished their time than in 1936 (29 per cent less). After the middle of 1937 the apprenticeship figure continued to fall, so that a struggle for apprentices has broken out between industry and handicraft."

In the Essen *National-Zeitung* on April 4 appears a report of the Harpener Bergbau AG, a coal-mining company, for the business year of 1938, in which appears the following passage:

"Furthermore, the past year has again seen great demands made upon the company's productive capacity; like the previous year, it has been for the staffs a year of most strenuous collaboration. The steep increase in figures of employment for 1936 and 1937 was not continued last year. . . . In spite of the calling up for labor service and the army, the proportion of 14 to 20-year-old workers increased. The two lowest ages employed, with their proportion of 3.9 of the staff, surpassed the average both of the Ruhr district and of the entire German mining industry."

Professor Dr. A. Schürmann writes as follows in an article entitled, "This Concerns the Security of Our Nutrition," appearing in the Essen *National-Zeitung* on March 28:

"There remain on our peasant farms only young workers who are not yet completely fit for work, or elderly people who are no longer fully fit. This lack of labor has not only become a danger to our agriculture, but is gradually beginning to injure the foundations of our national life. Large numbers of our peasantry have at the present arrived at the limit of their capacity for work. . . . And we have to acknowledge the existence of certain symptoms of physical overstrain among the young people. . . . As a result of being overburdened, they are deserting the countryside in large numbers because they can no longer stand the physical pressure."

THE PARASITES

While a definitely perceptible lack of skilled labor exists in all branches of industry, the *parasitical administrative apparatus* expands continuously.

"According to official findings the increase of the regular staff of Prussian municipalities and county councils was as follows:

OFFICIALS AND EMPLOYEES

March 31	
1935	185,984
1936	193,936
1937	203,246

"In 1938, the figure has risen by another 10,000. And all this in Prussia alone!"

Class divisions, which the Nazis claim to have abolished, appear nowadays in Germany in their most acute form. Sixty-three per cent of the working population of Germany earns less than 100 marks per month. In one year, 28,559 businesses were bankrupted. As we have already noted, 580,000 other small firms are to disappear "within an appreciable period." On the other hand, state credits and subsidies are generously extended to private large-scale capital, which is daily becoming richer at the expense of the working people and the middle class. The big capitalists raise their dividends from year to year. As the Essen *National-Zeitung* stated on April 5:

"There can be no doubt but that in the past year profits have again substantially increased, of which the reports of the joint-stock companies provide plentiful examples.

"For instance, in 1933 all German joint-stock companies paid dividends of an average of 2.8 per cent. By 1937, however, this average had reached 4.8 per cent. It is already clear that 1938 will see a higher figure. . . .

"At any rate, the statements of forthcoming dividends now before us show that in many cases the interest on share capital in comparison with 1937 has increased, not merely by 1 per cent, but by 2 to 3, and some cases even by 4 per cent. Of the breweries, in 1937 some 31 per cent of them distributed a dividend of 5.5 per cent, while 16 per cent of them paid 8 per cent. In 1938, the proportion of breweries paying 8 per cent rises to 23 per cent, while those paying

5.5 per cent has dropped to 24 per cent." (Our italics—*Ed.*)

But it was no rarity in 1938 that dividends of 8.10 or even 12 per cent should be paid. While the few rich are becoming ever richer, the many poor are becoming poorer. But a poor, enslaved, exhausted people, now being subjected to the recently introduced inflation, is by no means a strong support for industry and the state.

VOCATIONAL DISEASES AND ACCIDENTS

To the above, we should add the fact that vocational diseases and accidents at work are rapidly increasing. The following report, for instance, comes from Stuttgart:

"The lack of solvents, which used to come from abroad, has caused the employers to use untested substitutes which frequently cause symptoms of poisoning. According to the annual report of 1938 of the sick benefit funds, cases of occupational diseases have risen from 6,186 in 1936-37 to 13,556—by 120 per cent. It must also be noted in this regard that only officially reported cases are included in the statistics. Thousands of cases of poisoning are concealed, so as not to disturb the public, and are announced only as 'normal illnesses.'

"In the foodstuffs industry, large numbers of cases of skin trouble have appeared, as the result of the use of preservative agents. 'Flour eczema' has developed among bakers into a veritable epidemic. This disease was previously almost unknown among the bakery workers. But as the result of using poor, colored and damp flour 1,390 bakers suffered from this skin disease in 1937, while in 1936 only 24 cases were known. Cases of eczema contracted through fruit acids are also increasing."

A report from Frankfurt-on-Main states as follows:

"In the varnish factories, where the former foreign lacs and coloring matter are now replaced by benzine and benzole, cases of poisoning are increasing to a frightful extent. This happens particularly in the spray-varnish factories where the health of the girls and women employed suffers greatly from the rising steam of the benzole, while no care is taken to provide proper ventilation or masks."

According to reports in the official *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, the total of factory accidents, and road accidents in connection with industry, amounted to about 491,000 in 1932. In 1937, it had risen to 1,338,000. Thus, during the Hitler regime, the increase amounts to 172 per cent. But during the same period, the proportion of insured persons has risen only by 73 per cent. As the official report admits: "The frequency of accidents has increased more than the number of employed."

IN THE DUMPING GROUNDS

Another feature of life under German fascism—and one which is a considerable burden on the population—is the *compulsory delivery of disused materials and refuse of all kinds.* The following extract from a report, which appeared in the Viennese *Voelkischer Beobachter* of February 23, under the title of "The Collection of Old Material in the Ostmark [Austria]," is characteristic.

"The propaganda along these lines, which has been going on since November, 1936, in the old Reich, passed from mouth to mouth in the Ostmark immediately after the Anschluss. . . .

"A further word: the party was not founded in order to collect old material, and therefore it is not the task of the Storm Troops to collect scrap-metal. If additional collections are carried out by units of the movement, it happens only because, through the neglect, over decades, of the raw materials industry, and the lack of appreciation of the importance of old material and refuse as a source of raw materials, an effective raw materials industry must first be built up by wearisome toil."

In Salzburg (Austria), the so-called "de-junking" [*entrümpelung:* a manufactured word meaning to divest refuse or junk of its quality *as refuse.—Trans.*] was carried out with special thoroughness. In an announcement by the district group of the Reich Air Defense League, which appeared in the *Salz-*

burger Landeszeitung, the following statements are made:

"Next Sunday the 'de-junking' of the town will be carried out. This gives you the final opportunity of having your used material taken away free of charge. Until Saturday noon, the district group of the Reich Air Defense League will accept written notices of what is to be collected, and where. After this time limit, the collection will be at the expense of the owner. Both in whispers and aloud it is being claimed that the police are not going to make an inspection. Once more, let these know-alls learn the truth: the police will make an inspection! And a very thorough one, as a matter of fact! The day and hour will not be made known beforehand. Let it be said that these inspections will be repeated at irregular intervals. Let it be once again stated that it is to the interest of every individual to obey the order of the officials of the Reich Air Defense League. Every fellow countryman will have realized, from the Fuehrer's last speech, that every piece of disused material which comes under the Four-Year Plan must absolutely be obtained. Therefore, it is a crime against the community of the people if any such material is left uselessly lying around instead of —as has been possible up till now— having it taken free of charge for utilization. Let this final warning be taken to heart by everyone who wishes to avoid punishment."

But it is not only in Germany that the fascists gather together the junk; they are also ransacking the refuse piles of the Union of South Africa, as the following report attests:

"Three scientists have arrived in Johannesburg from Germany, who are to undertake the examination of the dumping grounds of the South African seaport towns. The newspapers report that the experts expressed their amazement at 'the wealth of serviceable material in the South African garbage cans.' It is announced that the purchase of large quantities of refuse for shipment to Germany will follow."

The import into Germany of foodstuffs is being ruthlessly cut down; but, in its place, a new article of commerce is being brought to Nazi Germany's shores: rubbish!

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